

SEP 21 1949

# THE MONTH

SEPTEMBER 1949

## POEMS

John Harling

THE TWELVE PROPHETS AT  
CONGONHAS DO CAMPO

J. B. Bury

THE RETURN TO CONTEMPLATION

A. H. Armstrong

LIAM O'FLAHERTY: A STORY OF  
DISCONTENT

Benedict Kiely

BROADCASTING

John McConnell

## REVIEWS

Basil FitzGibbon, Peter Wilding, J. B. Leishman,  
William Mann, H. D. Hanshell, John Garrett,  
Geoffrey Ashe, John Richards, Aubrey Gwynn

New Series Vol. 2, No. 3

2s. 6d. net.



COPYRIGHT

RESERVED

*More Autumn Books*

**The Mystery of Faith**

**Book II. The Sacrifice of the Church**

By MAURICE DE LA TAILLE, S.J.

15/- net

Book II treats of the Sacrifice Our Lord offers through His priest at Mass: in other words, it discusses the Mass as Sacrifice, in its Institution by Our Lord, in its relation to the Passion and to the Heavenly Sacrifice, in what makes it a true Sacrifice.

As in the first volume, there is an array of patristic authorities unparalleled in modern writing.

**Saints are not Sad**

Assembled by F. J. SHEED

12/6 net

We have here forty sketches of saints: and all of them were written (or in one instance translated) within the last twenty-five years, since each generation has its own needs and its own mental atmosphere, so that there is much to be said for having the saints interpreted by contemporaries for contemporaries.

Among the authors are Hilaire Belloc, Hilary Carpenter, O.P., G. K. Chesterton, Alice Curtayne, Archbishop Goodier, David Mathew and R. H. J. Steuart, S.J.

**This Perverse Generation**

By PETER MICHAELS

7/6 net

Peter Michaels prefers charity to politeness, and reminds us in profound but not uncertain terms that, since Christ is the architect of the universe, nothing is properly ordered in the sphere of politics, economics, recreation, education, unless the actions flow from careful study of the Divine Blueprint.

**Poverty**

By P. R. RÉGAMEY, O.P.

10/6

Translated by Rosemary Sheed

A study of Poverty as an essential element in the Christian life in which the teaching of scripture and tradition is fully displayed and the mystical essence of Poverty is also treated.

Poverty is the experience of millions who have not chosen it: but even involuntary Poverty of this sort can be made a choice of the will and become fruitful instead of corrosive. This may prove to be the most practical book we have yet published.

*(American readers please write to  
Sheed and Ward, Inc., 830 Broadway, New York.)*

**SHEED & WARD, LTD.,  
110-111 FLEET ST, LONDON, E.C.4**







THE  
**Ronald Knox**

TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

*is available in the following publications:*

**THE HOLY BIBLE**

In three uniform volumes Demy octavo (Library edition)

**THE OLD TESTAMENT**

I. GENESIS TO ESTHER

II. JOB TO MACHABEES (ready October)

21s. each

**THE NEW TESTAMENT**

12s. 6d.

**THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The original edition. Cap. octavo

Cloth 7s. 6d. Rexine 15s.

**THE FOUR GOSPELS**

In separate pamphlet form

*Paper covers 6d. each*

**THE BOOK OF PSALMS**

In the new Latin text of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, with Mgr. Knox's translation on the facing page. Printed in black and red.

*Cloth 8s. 6d. Pluvis 12s. 6d. Leather 21s. Morocco 30s.*

Coming shortly

**THE NEW MISSAL**

A complete Daily Missal in Latin and English, newly edited and designed by Rev. J. O'Connell and H. P. R. Finberg. All the Scriptural passages are given in the Knox translation. Printed in black and red.

*Buckram 25s. Leather 35s. Morocco 45s.*

*(Prospectus and specimen pages sent on request)*

---

**BURNS OATES** 28 ASHLEY PLACE, S.W.1

# Broken Images

A JOURNAL BY JOHN GUEST

Gerard Hopkins has written:

"It is unpretentious, it is honest, it is well-written, so well-written, indeed, that one looks forward with pleasure to Mr. Guest's future as an author. For he has more than a love of culture and good company. He has an observing eye, and a power of communicating what he has observed . . . should be able to make a place for himself in contemporary letters." (*In Time and Tide*)

Harold Nicolson has called it:

"One of the most memorable of the many personal records that I have read." (*In The Observer*)

10s. 6d. net

LONGMANS

## Elizabethan Lyrics

FROM THE ORIGINAL TEXTS

CHOSEN, EDITED AND ARRANGED BY

NORMAN AULT

A new edition of one of the most scholarly and imaginative anthologies of Elizabethan poetry which has ever been produced.

For people who read poetry for the sheer and simple pleasure of it, these 640 lyrics will be a source of limitless enjoyment. Louis Untermeyer, in fact, has said that the book is "as near a perfect anthology as the imperfect human mind can devise."

Ready, September 5th; 21s. net

LONGMANS

# THE MONTH

VOL. 2. No. 3

NEW SERIES

SEPTEMBER 1949

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
POEMS	
<i>John Harling</i>	149
THE TWELVE PROPHETS AT CONGONHAS DO CAMPO	<i>J. B. Bury</i> 152
THE RETURN TO CONTEMPLATION	<i>A. H. Armstrong</i> 171
LIAM O'FLAHERTY: A STORY OF DISCONTENT	<i>Benedict Kiely</i> 183
REVIEWS	
SHAPE WITHOUT FORM	<i>Basil FitzGibbon</i> 193
POETRY GRIGSON	<i>Peter Wilding</i> 197
SALT AND ASHES	<i>J. B. Leishman</i> 202
THE COURSE OF ITALIAN MUSIC	<i>William Mann</i> 203
DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL	<i>H. D. Hanshell</i> 205
TALES OUT OF SCHOOL	<i>John Garrett</i> 206
THE CONFESSIONS OF MAHATMA GANDHI	<i>Geoffrey Ashe</i> 209
EXCLUSIVENESS ANCIENT AND MODERN	<i>John Richards</i> 212
A GUIDE TO MONASTERIES	<i>Aubrey Gwynn</i> 213
BROADCASTING	<i>John McConnell</i> 215

The Month is edited from 114 Mount Street, W.1, GROsvenor 2995, and published by Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 6 & 7 Clifford Street, London, W.1. Subscriptions may be addressed to any bookseller, or, in Great Britain, direct to the publishers; in U.S.A. to British Publications Inc., 150 East 35th Street, New York 16, N.Y.; in France to W. H. Smith & Son, 248 Rue de Rivoli, Paris 1. The annual subscription is 30s., U.S.A. \$7, France 1,500 fr. Single copies 2s. 6d., 75c., 150 fr.

## NOTES ON NEW CONTRIBUTORS

JOHN HARLING hopes soon to bring out his first volume of poems.

J. B. BURY, by arrangement with *The Month*, has written for the current number of *The Cornhill* an introductory article on the life of Antônio Lisbôa, whose great achievement in sculpture he describes in our present issue. Later he will be contributing an article on the architecture of the Portuguese Jesuits in South America.

A. H. ARMSTRONG is a Senior Lecturer at University College, Cardiff.

BENEDICT KIELY is a young Irish novelist and critic. In *a Harbour Green*, his latest novel, is to appear shortly.

BASIL FITZGIBBON is well known as an authority on the history of the English recusants.

J. B. LEISHMAN is a Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, and well known for his translations of Rilke's poems.

WILLIAM MANN is a music critic of *The Times*.

JOHN GARRETT, Headmaster of Bristol Grammar School, has edited (with W. H. Auden) *The Poet's Tongue*, and is author of *Scenes from School Life*.

GEOFFREY ASHE has contributed to *The New Statesman*, etc.

JOHN RICHARDS is Classics Master at Beaumont College.

JOHN McCONNELL is a theatrical producer and literary critic.

# POEMS

By

JOHN HARLING

## *Iseult la Blonde*

UNQUIET Isolda, spare my poem  
His early passion for the tomb  
Your favours hide, your graces cover.

Be starlight to his evening,  
Enough for love, before he looks  
Behind your fair eyes for death.

Come to your hero by his tree  
And woo him for Isolda, the gay  
Girl only, and his anxiety

Allay sleeping; his voice mourning  
No longer the bride's cry, the gulls  
Crying doom and a king's spoiling.

Be only Isolda: do not play  
At death, but let the living flesh  
Play out its pageant and be still.

## *Iseult aux Blanches Mains*

FOLD your young unwanted hands,  
Sit in the still hall waiting,  
Dumb is the lyric of your pain,  
Ended the grieving.

You were his last and coldest castle,  
Yours was the ore he sifted  
For her traces; yours the veil  
His longing lifted

For her sake; for hers was the face  
 Your colder fairness mirrored.  
 Ungiven were the lips his selfish  
 Kisses covered.

When the boat is in the bay,  
 Climb to his high room, bearing  
 The pale blade of your grief, and strike  
 With your untrue tiding.

*Hero, from your tumulus*

**H**ERO, from your tumulus  
 Tell us how to know the bay  
 And why the tower fell down.

Time was your interpreter  
 And like a critic could not say  
 Who were the angels you observed  
 Or what the circle signifies.

Enormous animals emerged  
 And with destructive innocence  
 Danced out their days along the hill  
 But fell before we learned their names.

Hero, take us by the hand.  
 Tell us what the strongest signs  
 Intend, and the ancient sorrow.

*'Factus est Dominus Protector meus, et eduxit  
 me in latitudinem'*

Office of II<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost.

**E**NTER the garden, and ignore  
 The two-faced totem at the gate.  
 No stone tall cipher can restore  
 The Lion to the Lady's feet.

Discredited, the wizards wept.

Enter the garden, shed the thin  
Electric restlessness that found  
It needed more than witch's whim  
To cauterise the primal wound.

Disgraced, the Dwarfs left no addresses.

Enter the garden, no coy door  
Shall hold us from His bread-white hands  
No starlight kidnap us before  
The cool pole of our longing calls.

Healed, the hero fell asleep.

*'In medio duorum animalium innotesceris'*

Office of Good Friday.

I

TWO animals divide  
The chambers of the hungry heart

Algebras concede  
No grief to the dismembered part.

When shall the Lion  
And Lamb come home,

No bed amaze them  
Nor their peace defeat?

II

Mary shall overcome  
The cynic in the Advent wind

This Birth point  
The anxious shadow to its friend.

Lion and Lamb  
Are come home

The mirror pierced  
The heroes reconciled.

## THE TWELVE PROPHETS AT CONGONHAS DO CAMPO<sup>1</sup>

By

J. B. BURY

THE SANCTUARY CHURCH of Congonhas do Campo stands on a hill among the remote and melancholy highlands of Minas Gerais in the interior of Brazil. It is fronted by an imposing *Adro* or forecourt upon the parapets of which are grouped twelve statues of the Prophets. The surrounding landscape provides a magnificent setting for the statues, which command immense views over desolate hills, bounded by the dark blue mass of the Serra do Ouro Branco far off to the East, and the Serra de Santo Antonio in the distant North and West. The church dates from 1761. The forecourt was built at the end of the eighteenth century and the statues were carved in the first years of the nineteenth century by a local sculptor, already an old man, whose hands had been incapacitated by a mutilating disease.

The church is approached up a steep slope, through an elaborate garden enclosing a series of conical chapels, the chapels of the *Passos* (Via Crucis), in which there are successively displayed the scenes of the Passion, represented by groups of life-sized

<sup>1</sup> By arrangement with the author an introductory article on the life of the Aleijadinho was published in the summer number of *The Cornhill*. Further illustrations of the sculptor's work are reproduced there.—EDITOR.



wooden images. These crude, brightly painted figures, the work of the same crippled sculptor who carved the Prophets, are dramatically arranged and startling in their mixture of realism and caricature. The arrangement of the chapels of the *Passos*, on a zig-zag plan up the slope, is reminiscent of the much more elaborate but similarly planned approach of the Church of Bom Jesus do Monte near Braga in North Portugal, while the *Adro* at Congonhas with its statues recalls the "Court of the Kings," the *Adro* of the Santuario dos Remedios at Lamego near Braga. Congonhas is a humble rustic cousin of these splendid Portuguese monuments with their cascades of staircases, their statues, urns, pinnacles, columns and fountains. But the statues of the Twelve Prophets at Congonhas have a special interest and importance of a kind to which the Portuguese monuments afford no parallel. The first descriptions of Congonhas do Campo and its Sanctuary Church to appear in print were published in the travel books of European visitors who journeyed through Minas Gerais in the nineteenth century. The Baron von Eschwege visited Congonhas in 1811, Auguste de Saint Hilaire and John Luccock followed in 1818, Friedrich von Weech in 1827 and Sir Richard Burton in 1867. The same themes run through all these travellers' references to the statues of the Twelve Prophets. First, that the sculptor had crippled hands. Secondly, that he was a "primitive." Thirdly, the visitors pay what seem rather reluctant tributes to his work; perhaps they could not believe that real works of art could exist in so remote and rustic a setting. Saint Hilaire and Von Weech were careful to guard themselves against the possible derision of their nineteenth-century readers by emphasizing that "these statues are no masterpieces." Eschwege visited Congonhas when the artist was still alive, though it is evident that they never met. He is typical of his successors in the manner of his comment: "The principal sculptor who is prominent here," he writes, "is a crippled man with paralysed hands to which he attaches his chisel, and in this manner executes his works of art. Although his drapery is sometimes lacking in taste and his anatomy out of proportion, nevertheless one cannot fail to recognize the artistic gifts of this man who is entirely self-taught and has seen nothing else." Like the later travellers, Eschwege expresses his admiration hesitantly, as it were in spite of himself.

The sculptor's name, which his predecessors omitted, was

supplied by Richard Burton. "He is generally known," writes Burton, "as the Aleijado or Aleijadinho, the Cripple or the Little Cripple; others call him Antonio Francisco. His work was done with tools adjusted by an assistant to the stumps which represented arms." Antônio Francisco Lisbôa, to give him his full name, has always been more generally known by his nickname, *O Aleijadinho* (the Little Cripple). He was born in 1738 in Ouro Preto, the most famous of the gold-mining towns of Minas Gerais, and the capital of the Province. Tradition relates that his father was a Portuguese carpenter and his mother a negress slave. Astonishingly little is known for certain about him, though there is enough to make his life a fascinating separate study. Indeed, during the last twenty years a whole literature has been devoted to the subject by Brazilian scholars. Strong feelings have been aroused and violent controversies waged on the problems surrounding his career, particularly those connected with his artistic training. As will be seen, it is safe to conclude that literary sources—engravings for example—played an influential role in his designs. A similar influence can be discerned in the work of some of the painters who were his contemporaries and fellow countrymen. But however much the Aleijadinho may have borrowed, he never copied. On the contrary he treated his borrowed designs in a most personal and original manner. There is no suggestion of plagiarism.

The Aleijadinho's artistic career divides into three periods. The principal works of his first period (1770-1794) are the splendid Franciscan churches of Ouro Preto and São João d'El Rei and the Carmelite churches of Ouro Preto and Sabará. He also did work during these years for at least half a dozen other churches and for several *fazenda* (plantation) chapels. In general, all these varied achievements are characterized by a serene and harmonious rococo spirit, in marked contrast to the productions of his second period (1795-1807) which was devoted to the carving of the life-sized wooden images and stone statues for the Sanctuary Church at Congonhas do Campo.

The Congonhas figures are very uneven in quality, including both his most dramatic masterpieces and also much of his worst work, as if reflecting the irregular progress of his terrible disease. Moreover the general spirit of the work is grave, even sombre, rising at his best to the sublime, but descending also to bitterness

and caricature. His contemporary, the Spanish painter, Goya, affords an interesting parallel in the effect of physical misfortune changing the character of an artist's work. By his last period (1807-1812) the Aleijadinho had become so completely crippled by his disease that he was able to do little more than inspect and direct the work of pupils. He went blind in 1812, and died two years later.

Thus the work at Congonhas do Campo has a special significance in the Aleijadinho's career as his last major undertaking before disease and old age had incapacitated him. It represents, therefore, the culmination of his artistic effort and the crowning achievement of the colonial style of which he was the central creative figure. The Aleijadinho was primarily a sculptor and wood carver, but the majority of his work, including the Prophets, was of a monumental character, specifically designed as an integral part of buildings. The relationship between architecture and sculpture at Congonhas differs from that realized in the church facades of his earlier period in which the sculpture plays a subordinate role—whereas at Congonhas it dominates the architecture. But in neither his earlier nor his later work is there any very clear distinction between his role as a sculptor and his role as an architect. It is evident that neither he nor his contemporaries regarded a church facade, or forecourt, and the associated ornamental features as independent, separate works. In spite therefore, of the dominant role played by the Prophets they should not be regarded from any narrow viewpoint. On the contrary they comprise only a part, though admittedly the central part, of the several interdependent elements making up the grand design at Congonhas, which embraces the whole complex of the church and its satellite monuments.

The subordination of the construction to the statues of the Prophets and their exceptional interest as works of art has tended to divert attention from their architectural aspect. Approaching the church from the *Passos* the parapet of the *Adro* looks almost like a fortification. Its lines are a series of horizontals stretching across the crown of the slope. It is here that the statues play their time-honoured architectural role; they are a series of pinnacles whose upthrusting lines provide the needed contrast to the flat length of the horizontal parapets, and it is a most adequate and satisfactory solution because the sculptor has chosen to

treat the lines and volumes of his figures with a bold asymmetry. Where pinnacles or urns would have broken the monotony of the parapets but reimposed a monotony of their own, these stylized statues have freed the whole conception of rigidity and given it a rhythmic movement.

The Aleijadinho had already been associated with the introduction of a rococo three-dimensional and curvilinear style in the facades of the Franciscan churches of Ouro Preto and São João d'El Rei. These most beautiful and original facades mark a creative revolution in Brazilian church architecture.

The churches built in Minas Gerais during the first half of the eighteenth century belong to an architectural style known in Brazil as the *Estilo Jesuítico*, though by no means confined in application to the churches of the Society. Indeed, churches continued to be built in the so-called Jesuit style, long after the tragic expulsion of the Society from the country (1759). Broadly speaking this style was a survival of the architecture of the second half of the sixteenth century, variously described as Late Renaissance, Counter-Reformation or Mannerist, and associated with Michelangelo and Vignola in Italy, and with Herrera (architect of the Escorial) in Spain. The characteristic features of the *Estilo Jesuítico* are a serenely rectangular treatment of the building, in the ground plan, elevation and apertures; and an absence of external decoration compensated for by an astonishing exuberance of internal ornament. The side altars, the chancel, and above all the high altar are covered with a continuous uninterrupted wealth of carving, painted and gilded with the most splendid profusion. The *Estilo Jesuítico* represents a direct Portuguese derivation, and its supreme realizations are therefore to be found where Portuguese influence was strongest, in the coastal cities, above all at Salvador da Bahia, the original capital of the colony. The Jesuit church, now Cathedral, at Salvador, is appropriately the greatest monument of the *Estilo Jesuítico* surviving in Brazil.

In the Province of Minas Gerais the first half of the eighteenth century might be described as the era of the Portuguese immigrants. The second half of the century, in contrast, was the age of the Creoles, the Brazilian-born offspring of the immigrant pioneers. This new generation included much mixed blood, mestizo and mulatto—for example the Aleijadinho. Parallel

with the social changes whereby a population mainly of Portuguese origin was succeeded by a Creole generation, new architectural and ornamental styles were adopted which emancipated Minas Gerais from the hitherto unquestioned principles of *Estilo Jesuítico* church construction. The artistic innovations reflect the altered social background. The reaction of the Creoles against the Portuguese of Portugal who governed the colony, natural enough psychologically, was much intensified by special economic and political factors. The new style adopted by the Creoles, appropriately referred to in general terms as the *Estilo Aleijadinho*, represents no mere modification, but a drastic and radical departure from previous practice. The severe rectangular lines of the Jesuit style give way to complex curves; the facades of the Aleijadinho's churches are decorated with sculpture in high relief; and the ornament applied to the altars and throughout the interiors is discontinuous and restrained, less imposing than the sumptuous decoration of the Jesuit style, but more subtle and harmonious.

While the architecture of the Sanctuary Church at Congonhas belongs to a transitional phase in which the basic *Estilo Jesuítico* design has been modified by the incorporation of new elements, the *Adro*, built much later, represents the *Estilo Aleijadinho* at its height. Not content with the restriction of the ornament to sculpture in relief, on the facade, the decorative urge at Congonhas, refusing as it were to be confined, breaks forth as sculpture in the round and is projected outwards to the parapets of the *Adro* and down the approach.

The subtle use of curved forms, so characteristic of the *Estilo Aleijadinho*, while absent in the church, is apparent in the *Adro*. Monumental in character, with its broad parapets and elaborately contrived interior staircase, it is a work of dignity and good proportion. The effect is essentially simple, but behind this apparent simplicity there lies a complex harmony of contrasted concave and convex lines giving to the whole a variety and movement, and avoiding the heaviness and monotony from which it would otherwise suffer. Thus the *Adro* itself is an architectural work of some distinction, and when viewed as a whole, with the statues of the Prophets fulfilling their architectural function, the complete creation is seen to be one of those magnificent dramatic ensembles of interdependent building and sculpture in which the artists of the *Estilo Aleijadinho* excelled.



Whereas the *Estilo Jesuitico* is fundamentally Late Renaissance in architectural character, the *Estilo Aleijadinho* belongs, in the widest sense of that term, to the baroque. The spirit of the baroque was that of Catholic and Imperial universality. In this the Aleijadinho was a true baroque master. He instinctively grasped the basic baroque ideas of movement, of limitlessness and theatricality, the idea that all the arts, architecture, sculpture, carving, gilding, painting, even such temporary spectacles as a pageant or a firework display, should all be made use of as elements harmoniously contributing to one grand artificial effect.

The Brazilians have only "discovered" the Aleijadinho's work within the last twenty years, and as yet he is almost unknown outside South America. Contrary to the opinion of the nineteenth-century travellers, there can be no doubt that his Prophets are masterpieces; and in three separate respects: architecturally, as a group; individually as works of sculpture; and psychologically as studies of the personages they represent. In this latter respect they are in many ways the most satisfactory sculptured representations of Old Testament personages which have ever been executed, always excepting Michelangelo's Moses (1514-16) in the Church of S. Pietro in Vincoli at Rome. The Gothic Prophets tend to be stereotyped; for example, among the thirteenth-century statues at the north doorway of Chartres Cathedral, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah and Jeremiah are almost identical in type. The masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance are Donatello's Job and Jeremiah (1427-1436) on the *campanile* of the Cathedral at Florence, but these splendid figures have attracted more interest as portraits than as representations of their subjects. In the Capella Chigi, S. Maria del Popolo at Rome there are statues of Elijah and Jonah (1519-1520) by Lorenzo Lotti and of Daniel and Habakkuk (1656-1657) by Bernini, which are important works of sculpture in their respective styles; but appear almost irrelevant as studies of the Prophets they portray.

An exception, however, is the work of Klaus Sluter (c. 1340-1408), a Dutch sculptor employed by Philippe le Hardi, Duke of Burgundy. He carved six life-sized statues of Old Testament personages for the monumental *Calvaire* in the middle of the great cloister of the Chartreuse at Champmol near Dijon. These statues belong to the Gothic age, if only to its final *Flamboyante* phase, but their style already forecasts the artistic revolution

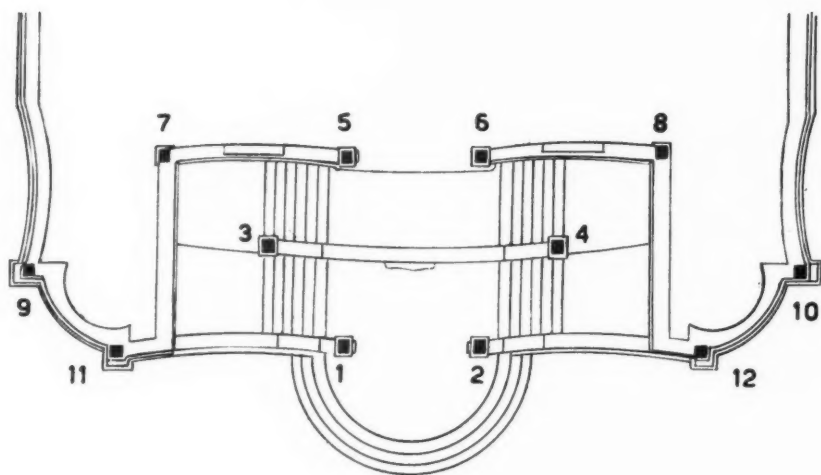
associated with Van Eycks. The Prophets chosen were Moses, David, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Daniel and Isaiah. They are restless, dramatic, highly individualized figures, the work of the sculptor's old age. It is a curious coincidence that Klaus Sluter must have been much the same age when he carved his Six Prophets (1400-1405), as was the Aleijadinho when he carved his Twelve (1800-1807), exactly four centuries later and on the other side of the world. The Aleijadinho was the victim of a malignant disease; one of the few biographical details recorded of Klaus Sluter is that from Easter, 1399, he was continually in the hands of "phisiciens et apothicaires, à cause d'une griefve et périlleuse maladie." The Aleijadinho is said to have been "intolerante e mesmo iroso" and the traditional stories all emphasize the care he took to shun society and the poverty and isolation of his existence. Likewise the legends surrounding Klaus Sluter, after describing the pains he took to hide himself, attribute to him "un caractère méfiant et peu sociable," and speak of him as having led "une pauvre vie triste et solitaire." Furthermore, Klaus Sluter's statues, though completely different in style, share with the Aleijadinho's work a deep interest in the personalities of the Prophets, conceived in an heroic manner. But perhaps the most remarkable similarity of all between the *Calvaire* at Champmol and the *Adro* at Congonhas lies in the relation between the statuary and its architectural setting. In both monuments the artist has broken with established tradition and has subordinated the supporting architecture to his sculpture. Hitherto, in mediaeval France as in colonial America, buildings had often enough been enriched with sculpture, but architecture regarded primarily as a setting for statues represents in both cases a creative innovation.

The choice of the Prophets at Congonhas, though not completely logical, appears less arbitrary than the choice of the four in the Capella Chigi, of the six at Champmol, the eight attributed to Donatello and Il Rosso on the *campanile* of Florence Cathedral, or of the ten carved for the Santa Casa at Loreto by the Lombardi and the Della Porta brothers in the mid-sixteenth century. The Congonhas Prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Jonah, Joel, Amos, Nahum, Obadiah and Habakkuk; in other words, the four major prophets, seven of the minor prophets and Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe. There is no satisfactory

explanation for the omission of Micah. Sir Richard Burton remarks upon the choice with characteristic irony: "At the angles of the sets of steps," he writes, "and at intervals in front of the platform, are twelve gigantic figures of the four major Prophets; sundry of the dozen invidiously distinguished as the minor being nowhere." Besides Micah, those missing are the last four Minor Prophets, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. It is most improbable that their sculptor had any hand in the choice of the Prophets selected. Even less would he have had any say in the more general decision to choose Prophets, rather than for example, Apostles. On the other hand, the deep thought and feeling which are evident in his most personal interpretation imply that the Prophets were as a general subject singularly congenial to him.

"Within the area," wrote John Luccock, describing the *Adro* of the Sanctuary Church, "are twelve statues about eight feet high, intended to represent the Prophets of the Jewish Church. They are well executed, their costume appropriate, their attitudes various; and each holds a scroll, on which is engraved, in Latin and an ancient letter, a striking passage from his own writings. It is said that they are the production of an artist who had no hands, that the hammer and chisel were fastened to his stumps by an assistant, and in that manner their most delicate cutting was executed. One circumstance slightly supports the credibility of this story; the stone, of which the statues are formed is of a soft and saponaceous kind, which abounds in the quarries of the neighbourhood, and appears to harden from exposure to the air." Besides the scrolls mentioned by Luccock, the twelve statues at Congonhas have other general characteristics. With the exception of Amos they are all dressed in a more or less similar manner, and with the exception of Amos and Isaiah they all wear elaborate conical hats. The expressions of all the figures are grave, thoughtful and devotional, though with marked individual variations, such as Isaiah, whose face shows a fierce urgency, and Jonah who looks half propitiatory and half querulous. They all have long curly hair, and six of them have long S-shaped moustaches with clipped Byzantine beards, following the line of the jawbone and ending in two spiral curls at the chin; of the others, four are cleanshaven and two have long curly beards. The modelling of the mouth and lips in all





- |                    |                  |                    |                     |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 7. <i>Jonah</i>    | 1. <i>Isaiah</i> | 2. <i>Jeremiah</i> | 8. <i>Joel</i>      |
| 9. <i>Amos</i>     | 3. <i>Baruch</i> | 4. <i>Ezekiel</i>  | 10. <i>Nahum</i>    |
| 11. <i>Obadiah</i> | 5. <i>Daniel</i> | 6. <i>Hosea</i>    | 12. <i>Habakkuk</i> |

THE SANCTUARY CHURCH, CONGONHAS DO CAMPO



DANIEL

NAHUM



DANIEL



JOEL



JONAH

the statues is particularly felicitous. The pupils of the eyes are bevelled, instead of being hollowed out in the customary manner. This represents a curious and technically most interesting feature of the sculptor's individual style. The hands are nearly all deformed, broad, with prominent knuckle-bones and strongly marked articulations; they are the hands of men accustomed to hard manual work, twisted by rheumatism. In several the thumb is carved as if it was another finger, unnaturally long and in the same plane as the fingers instead of in its proper plane of opposition. Some of the feet are ill-shaped and legs awkwardly twisted. Other "defects" of the statues are very probably intentional, foreshortening as a perspective device, designed to correct their proportions when seen from below; such, for example, are the arms and forearms out of scale, lower members disproportionately small, feet very small and necks and heads relatively large. The statue of Amos viewed from close up illustrates these defects very well. But it stands high on the eastern parapet of the *Adro*, and from below, at the foot of the steps, its proportions appear natural and correct.

The condition of the Prophets at Congonhas is still surprisingly good, though they have inevitably suffered from some philistinism owing to their accessibility. Fingers and teeth have been broken off and initials have been scratched on the lower parts of the statues, and on Daniel's lion and Jonah's whale. The *steatite* (soapstone) from which they are carved is flawed with crystals of iron oxide and these have in several places caused ugly pitting of the surfaces, but in general the state of preservation is much better than might be expected since, in spite of the hardening which Luccock observed, the material never attains the hardness of, say, marble.

We are told by an early biographer, who wrote in 1858, that "the Aleijadinho was an enthusiast in sacred sculpture, and his favourite reading was the Bible." The insight and intelligence with which the crippled sculptor read his Bible are evident in the characterization of the Prophets and since such a study has not yet been undertaken by any of the numerous Brazilian critics of his work, this aspect deserves a more particular analysis.

The statues of Isaiah and Jeremiah were among the first carved by the Aleijadinho; they date therefore from about 1800. Just as the Book of Isaiah is the first of the Prophetic Books in the Old



Testament, so Isaiah himself stands pre-eminent above all the other Prophets, not only in the contents and spirit of his writings but also in their form and style. As befits the greatness of Isaiah, the Aleijadinho's statue of him is one of the finest in the group. Isaiah threatened divine judgments against the pride and arrogance which he ceaselessly denounced as the roots of evil. He himself wore a garment of hair cloth, symbol of repentance, and his nature is reflected in the simplicity, clearness and sublimity of his prophecies. The Aleijadinho admirably captures these characteristics. His statue of Isaiah is more simply dressed than those of his other Prophets. It is the figure of an old but powerful and fiercely energetic man, dramatically conceived and most effectively executed. It is reminiscent, in several respects, of Klaus Sluter's John the Baptist on the door of the Church at Champmol. In contrast to Isaiah, Jeremiah emerges from his writings as a man of mild and retiring nature, sensitive and melancholy. His Book of Lamentations is an astonishing exhibition of his power to evoke emotions of sorrow and pathos. His character is an example of moral courage sustained by divine inspiration against the opposing influence of a diffident temperament. Jeremiah has been unusually fortunate in the manner in which he has been represented in European sculpture. Whether by chance or design Donatello's portrait of Francesco Soderini is an impressive study of the Prophet. Aurelio Lombardi's turbaned Jeremiah at Loreto is certainly one of the best interpretations ever realized. Klaus Sluter conceived the Prophet as a scholar and gave him glasses. The Aleijadinho's figures eschew any such disconcerting anachronisms and the sculptor merely indicates Jeremiah's scholarship by a quill pen held in the left hand. In general the Congonhas statue interprets the Prophet's temperament with sympathy and understanding. It conveys the impression of a man of learning rather than of action. The expression is kind and benevolent but neither dominating nor masterful. Thus the statues of Isaiah and Jeremiah standing on either side of the entrance to the staircase, display a contrast of the active and the passive, the confident and diffident, the extrovert and the introvert. Each holds a scroll on which is carved, in relief, a Latin inscription. These inscribed scrolls are not quotations from the relevant Prophetic Books as Luccock thought, but summaries of certain passages in them. The passages chosen from Isaiah are Chapter VI, verses 1-3

and 6-7, "Vidi Dominum sedentem super solium" ("I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne"). Those from Jeremiah are Chapter XXXV, verses 12-13 and 17, "Numquid non recipietis disciplinam, ut obediatis verbis meis?" ("Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words?")

The statues of Baruch and Ezekiel, which stand opposite each other on the branches of the divided staircase are notably asymmetrical, reflecting in the manner of their sculpture the difference in calibre of the two men. The Aleijadinho represents Baruch as a youth, almost a boy, of eager appearance but of unformed character. The reason for his inclusion in the group and in so prominent a position among the major Prophets, is logical since the Book of Baruch (relegated to the Apocrypha in the Authorized Version) follows next after the Book of Jeremiah in the Vulgate. Turning from the somewhat colourless figure of the scribe Baruch to the dominating personality of the great Ezekiel, we are faced with the contrast between a man of merit and a man of genius, a gifted follower and a sublime leader. The statue of Ezekiel is one of the Aleijadinho's masterpieces, and it would be difficult to imagine a finer and truer conception of the Prophet's character. Ezekiel's outstanding characteristics as a Prophet are his astonishing vigour and energy. He ranks as a poet, and he was also a dreamer and visionary, describing his dreams and visions with the sharpness and distinctness of real existence. His brief, simple reference to the death of his wife strikes a poignant note of grief which reveals for a moment the human and affectionate nature underlying his single-minded devotion to his prophetic office. The Aleijadinho's Ezekiel is essentially, and appropriately, a figure of action. The character expressed in the face is powerful and vigorous.

The conventional element in the representation of the Prophets is well illustrated by Ezekiel. The scroll held in the left hand, though treated in a much more monumental style by the Aleijadinho, descends directly from the scrolls which Girolamo Lombardi's Ezekiel holds resting in his lap at Loreto, and which Klaus Sluter's Ezekiel carries. The right arm across the chest with pointing hand also goes back to the seated statue at Loreto which may in turn derive from a late fifteenth-century Florentine engraving of the Prophet. But whereas in these earlier representations the gesture has little meaning or effectiveness, the

Aleijadinho gives it force and value. In his Ezekiel, the right arm across the chest is an important element emphasizing the whole attitude of the statue, which displays a stylized rhythm reminiscent of certain Oriental dance movements; a reminiscence emphasized by the Oriental features, in particular the slanting eyes.

The threshold of the *Adro* is flanked by the statues of Daniel and Hosea, facing one another across the head of the staircase. Daniel is without doubt the finest of all the Congonhas Prophets, indeed, he is the Aleijadinho's masterpiece; and it says much for the statue of Hosea that it is not unworthy to stand opposite. The Aleijadinho represents Daniel, Prince as well as Prophet, in a befitting manner, certainly more appropriate to the subject than are the weak youths portrayed by Girolamo Lombardi and Bernini. The Congonhas Daniel is a young man but he has a dignity and strength at least as impressive, in its entirely different manner, as the masterful, much older man sculptured by Klaus Sluter at Champmol. The Brazilian statue conveys an impression of elegance, of intelligence and of a grave nobility of expression and attitude. The robes are unusually elaborate and heavily decorated. A laurel wreath surrounds the conical hat. The powerful mask-like head, with its oriental features, inclines gracefully forward. At his feet, looking up at him, a Byzantine lion shares the pedestal with the Prophet. Even the details of this figure are well executed, though the thumb of the right hand is deformed in a fashion so frequently found in the Aleijadinho's later work, that it is tempting to suppose that he used his own crippled extremities as models. The awkward and imperfect right leg of Hosea exhibits the same possibly intentional representation of deformity.

Unlike the Book of Daniel, Hosea's writings reveal little direct evidence of the character of the author. But indirectly he emerges as a man with strong human feelings of love and sympathy. Most Brazilian critics are united in their admiration for the Aleijadinho's Hosea as one of the finest of the Twelve Prophets; and certainly the intelligent and straightforward expression here portrayed well represents Hosea's outspoken religious devotion and strong humanity. One critic has described the statue as "among the first of our models of super-humanity." The comment could equally well be applied to the Prophet himself, a sensitive idealist who practised in his own troubled



domestic life the Divine compassion which he of all the Prophets was the first to expound.

At the angles of the inner parapet of the *Adro*, one on either side, stand Jonah and Joel, two of the most individual figures in the group. A judicious critic has concluded from a study of the Book of Jonah that "the Prophet's mind was dark and moody, gloomy and sullen; his heart irascible and melancholy; his disposition petulant, querulous and liable to peevish and morbid infatuations; his temper refractory; his spirit self-willed; and his behaviour almost incredibly foolish and rash." Much of the foregoing characterization of Jonah is reflected in the Aleijadinho's magnificent statue of the Prophet. The left hand and forearm are raised in a dramatic gesture and the deeply lined face, with the lachrymal canal much accentuated and slanting oriental eyes, is turned heavenward, as if expostulating with Jehovah. It is interesting to contrast the Jonah realized by Lorenzo Lotti for the Capella Chigi. Lorenzo's statue, sculptured at the height of the Italian Renaissance, based on a design by Raphael, represents nothing more than a very handsome boy, too young and idealized to show any character. As a work of art it is admirable and as a youthful David it might have been appropriate, but as a Jonah its unsuitability is so complete that it may be regarded as a classic example of Renaissance single-mindedness. It is certainly the antithesis of the Aleijadinho's Jonah.

The highly conventionalized monster at the foot of the Congonhas statue is a tongued dolphin, spouting through two nostrils across the front of the Prophet's robes, and with its sinuous tail curved gracefully up his back. A larger version of the same *bicho* appears as the central decorative motif of the cornice on the main (river) facade of an important *château* in North Portugal. This is the *Quinta do Freixo* (The Palace of the Ash Tree) built by the Siennese Niccolò Nasoni for the Noronha family on the banks of Douro near Oporto. The *Quinta do Freixo* dates from the third quarter of the eighteenth century, but whether there is a direct connection or some common source from which the Portuguese and Brazilian *bichos* both derive, remains to be discovered. The treatment at Congonhas deserves special note for its imaginative qualities. The Aleijadinho may have adopted his dolphin, and his lion, from elsewhere, but he had a wide field from which to select and the manner in which he chose to

symbolize Daniel's den of lions and Jonah's Leviathan is no less imaginative than the manner in which he has linked the beast and Prophet, in each statue, into one artistic whole.

The statue of Joel shows none of the theatrical posturing so appropriately applied to Jonah. It is a stern and formidable figure with an almost sarcastic expression. The features are markedly Semitic, and the eyes have the oriental slant. Joel and Hosea each hold a quill pen in the right hand. Joel's scroll is appropriately inscribed with a passage referring to Chapter I of his Book, verses 1-2, 4 and 10, "Residuum erucæ comedit locusta" ("That which the palmer worm hath left hath the locust eaten"). Jonah, equally appropriately, holds an inscription based on the opening episode in his Book, Chapter I, verse 17 and Chapter III, verse 3, "Erat Jonas in ventre piscis tribus diebus" ("Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days").

The statues of Amos and Nahum, Obadiah and Habakkuk, which stand on the outer parapets of the *Adro*, were probably the last figures sculptured by the Aleijadinho, dating therefore from as late as 1807. The statue of Amos is the most interesting of the four. In several respects it is unique. The features are markedly oriental, not Semitic like Joel, but Mongolian in type. The clean-shaven face is striking and impressive, but not expressive; it has character, but it is the inscrutable and impassive character of the Far Eastern physiognomy or of the American Indian. Chinese influences, deriving from the important colony of Macao, were felt in Portugal throughout the eighteenth century and penetrated to Brazil; so Far-Eastern features at Congonhas could well be explained. On the other hand, if the sculptor's intention was to represent an Indian type, the choice would be singularly appropriate for the herdsman of Tekoa and dresser of sycamore trees. Amos was in fact a Hebrew *sertanejo*, or backwoodsman, and it is tempting to suppose that the Aleijadinho, with extraordinary imaginative perception, decided to portray the shepherd Prophet as his Brazilian equivalent, a *bugre* (aboriginal Indian) or *caboclo* (mestizo, rustic) of the colonial age. The dress of the statue is also entirely different from that of all the others, stressing once more the unique status and origin of Amos among the Prophets. He wears trousers, a sheepskin tunic and a soft cap. Here again, in the costume, a conventional element appears. The dress adopted at Congonhas derives directly from

the model used by Girolamo Lombardi for his Amos on the north wall of the Santa Casa at Loreto. Girolamo's statue wears the same soft cap with its conical top lying back; the same sheepskin jerkin with the wool inwards, though shorter and sleeveless; and the same trousers, though of lighter material and tied under the knee and at the ankle. On the other hand, the Aleijadinho's Amos has no shepherd's crook, no strap slung from his shoulder supporting a pouch, and no dog at his feet, all of which appear in Girolamo's figure. The inscription on the scroll held by Amos at Congonhas refers to Chapter VII of his Book "Tulit me Dominus cum sequeretur gregem" ("The Lord took me as I followed the flock," cf. verses 14-15). On the western parapet of the *Adro*, opposite Amos, stands Nahum, presented as a wise and ancient patriarch, but giving a clear impression of one stricken by the weakness of old age. The stance is similar to that of Daniel. The long beard, venerable appearance and elongated head have reminded several Brazilian critics of Gothic statuary. As a study of the poet who proclaimed the fall of Nineveh and of the Prophet whose wide humanity, not limited to Israel, voiced the conscience of all the peoples—the Nahum at Congonhas conveys an appropriate air of dignity.

The statues of Obadiah and Habakkuk point towards Heaven opposite one another on either side of the front parapet of the *Adro*. Habakkuk's left arm is raised in a gesture which is symmetrical with the raised right arm of Obadiah. The Book of Obadiah is only a fragment. The Prophet's character remains obscure, and the Aleijadinho's statue of him reflects this featurelessness. It is a figure without personality or expression. The right arm gesticulates vaguely and ineffectually; indeed, this is probably the weakest statue in the group. The statue of Habakkuk is an altogether finer work; his head and features are well modelled and the face has character though without any very marked traits. His raised left arm is more convincing than that of Obadiah; but it must be admitted that these gesturing arms are of little artistic value in either case. On the other hand, they make an important contribution when the statues are viewed as elements in the architectural design of the *Adro*.

For once, it must be admitted, the Aleijadinho is surpassed by his predecessors not only in technique but also in interpretation. Il Rosso's Obadiah (1422) on the West face of Giotto's *campanile*

of Florence Cathedral, avoids the meaningless ineffectiveness of the Obadiah at Congonhas. Bernini's dramatic Habakkuk in the Capella Chigi, and the early fifteenth-century Habakkuk (ascribed to Donatello) on the East face of Giotto's *campanile*, both, in their different ways, do the Prophet at least as much justice as does the Aleijadinho's figure. The explanation of this apparent failure in the Aleijadinho's creative genius, is probably that the combined effects of old age and disease were at last beginning to undermine his strong-willed spirit. It is likely that as the master's faculties weakened, so his assistants took a greater share in the work, until in the final statues his own contribution was reduced mainly to supervision.

The surroundings of Congonhas, set in remote uplands, scarred with abandoned gold workings, provide the Aleijadinho's work with a magnificent background. The Prophets on their high terrace command immense views over desolate hills, bounded by the dark blue mass of the Serra do Ouro Branco far off to the east and the Serra de Santo Antonio in the distant north and west. These remote and melancholy landscapes give the stone figures on the *Adro* an added, unforgettable grandeur.

The assessment of the artistic importance of the Aleijadinho's work affords difficulties owing to the special features involved. First there are the personal factors; the isolation in which he lived, his crippled condition and old age. Secondly there is the very late date of his work. As has already been noticed, the Congonhas Prophets are anatomically imperfect, even when every allowance is made for deliberate efforts to correct perspective distortion. Technically, compared even with the work of Klaus Sluter, much more so with the sculpture of Bernini, the Aleijadinho's statues are crude, in fact colonial. The nineteenth-century German and French travellers, impressed by the sculptor's lack of opportunity to obtain proper artistic education owing to his colonial isolation, labelled him a "primitive." The English travellers, who were apparently told exaggerated stories to the effect that the sculptor had lost his hands altogether, showed more interest in the practical difficulties confronting him in his work. Eschwege, echoed by Saint Hilaire and Von Weech, expresses admiration, not for the statues in their own artistic right, but for their sculptor, as a "primitive," deserving recognition in the rather patronizing manner reserved for such. Atten-

tion is unconsciously shifted from the sculpture itself to the sculptor; and the Aleijadinho, like the Douanier Rousseau, and other "primitives" before and since, becomes a figure of interest, sympathy or pathos, thus clouding the issue of the real artistic merit or otherwise of his work. Luccock and Burton sought to rationalize the paradox of what the latter calls "the handiwork, Hibernicè, of a handless man." So Luccock observes the softness of the material which the sculptor employed, and Burton quotes the parallel instance of Miss Sarah Biffin (1784-1850) who was born without hands and feet but became a successful painter in spite of her handicap. Their line of approach may vary, characteristically enough, but the English, like the other travellers, transfer their interest to the artist at the expense of his art.

It might be expected that the effects of advancing disease and age upon the sculptor's powers would be reflected in the work at Congonhas, spread, as it was, over so many years. And it has been suggested that the deterioration in the imaginative impulse noticeable in the later statues may be attributed to these causes. But it is important, in considering the Prophets, to bear in mind that the entire work belongs to Aleijadinho's old age, roughly his sixtieth to his seventieth year. There are certain elements which may be thought characteristic of a work of old age. Thus Aenne Liebreich ("Claus Sluter," Brussels, 1936) writes of the monument at Champmol: "Le Calvaire se relève comme une oeuvre de vieillesse par l'extraordinaire pénétration psychologique du visage humaine, par son caractère pictural, sa forme ouverte, et par une certaine négligence des données réelles du corps et des membres que Sluter avait été l'un des premiers à respecter au portail." In this as in other respects Klaus Sluter and the Aleijadinho claim a curiously close kinship across the four intervening centuries.

So many indeed are the similarities between the productions of the two sculptors in contrast to any work of a like nature conceived in the interval, that it seems paradoxically more appropriate to measure the Aleijadinho by fifteenth-century artistic standards than by those of his own age. It has been customary to regard the Congonhas Prophets as a belated flowering of the baroque style<sup>1</sup> or of the rococo.<sup>2</sup> The conception of the

<sup>1</sup> Sacheverell Sitwell in *The Architectural Review*, March 1944.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Robert C. Smith in *The Art Bulletin*, September 1948.



group as a whole is baroque, but taking the Prophets individually, baroque and rococo elements are few and infrequently applied. The dramatic postures and gestures of baroque statuary are used rarely and with the greatest moderation. The majority of the statues, including some of the finest of them, are as static in conception as any fifteenth-century (Gothic or Renaissance) design. Ezekiel and Jonah are exceptional in their raised forearms and in the general rhythm of their treatment. The accessories of the statues are neither baroque nor rococo. On the contrary, they appear to derive directly from a late fifteenth-century Florentine source, the so-called Broad Manner series of engravings of the Prophets, attributed to Botticelli or his immediate artistic circle. Through what devious channels of re-engraving or reproduction these designs became available to the Aleijadinho remains to be discovered, but it is from them that the characteristic conical hats of the Congonhas Prophets and their robes with decorated borders, appear most evidently to derive. The treatment of the inscribed scrolls held by the Prophets is even more revealing stylistically. These massive scrolls are the most prominent of all the accessories. Had there been any strong rococo influence they would have been the first to show the effects. They present an ideal opportunity for the graceful and elaborate *cartouche* treatment which is perhaps the most important and widespread of all rococo ornamental motifs. In fact, however, they are treated with firm restraint, almost severity.

The curiously fifteenth-century feeling in the Aleijadinho's work is not confined to the Prophets. Fifteenth-century European art embraces both the *Flamboyante* Gothic and the Early Renaissance, involving strange juxtapositions and blends. Equally strange juxtapositions of varied styles, Gothic, Classical and Rococo, are to be found in the decorative work which the Aleijadinho realized during his earlier years for the Church of São Francisco de Assis at Ouro Preto.

Such then, is the extraordinary character of the Aleijadinho's art. Among his colonial contemporaries in the Americas he stands pre-eminent. The important work of his fellow mulatto sculptor Valentim da Fonseca e Silva at Rio de Janeiro is in every way more correct and perfect in style, but it lacks the personal, emphatic originality of the statues at Congonhas. Even the great Mexican Tresguerras (1765-1833) was a less creative artist, for



all his prolific output and versatile talents. The profundity of the Aleijadinho's work gives it a unique status in Portuguese and Spanish colonial art. It aspires, in fact, to a position beyond colonial limitations and may yet be hailed as the discovery of this generation, just as El Greco's painting was discovered by the last.

## THE RETURN TO CONTEMPLATION

By

A. H. ARMSTRONG

ANYONE acquainted with the movement of contemporary Christian thought must be struck by the many signs of a decisive change of outlook, especially among Catholic philosophers and theologians in France and Germany. There is a remarkable convergence of different lines of thought towards what may be called a more intuitive or contemplative way of thinking: in traditional language, there is an increasing emphasis on the *intellectus*, the higher, intuitive, rather than on the *ratio*, the lower, discursive activity of the mind. There is a growing distrust of the syllogistic method of demonstration and a tendency to consider metaphysics and theology no longer in terms of problems requiring solutions but of mysteries which can only be described, to adopt a valuable distinction of M. Gabriel Marcel. M. Marcel himself and other members of the rather heterogeneous group of thinkers who are loosely described as Christian Existentialists, from Kierkegaard to Berdyaev, have played a considerable part in bringing about this development. But it is something wider and deeper than mere conformity with a contemporary fashion of thought. Catholic interest in Russian Orthodox thought, in the great theologian Bulgakov and in Solovyev, the master of both Berdyaev and Bulgakov, has played its part in the

same development, though perhaps a smaller part than has sometimes been suggested. The increasingly serious attention paid by Catholic thinkers to mystical experience has helped in the same direction. Thomistic scholarship has shown the importance in St. Thomas's own thought of the "Platonic" or "Augustinian" element, with its emphasis on *intellectus*, which he inherited from his predecessors and of the patristic background of his whole thinking. The Liturgical Movement has undoubtedly nourished a more contemplative type of thought, for it carries us back to the ancient piety of the first Christian centuries and introduces us to a sort of contemplative approach to God in symbolical worship distinct from discursive meditation, affective prayer as usually understood and practised, and the high mystical contemplation which has passed beyond signs. In Père Bouyer's great book *Le Mystère Pascal*<sup>1</sup> we can see the study of the Liturgy, the Fathers and the Bible bearing fruit in speculative theology of the highest order directed immediately to the living of the Christian life.

The mention of P. Bouyer's book leads directly to what is perhaps the most remarkable and important feature of the transformation of Catholic thought of which we are speaking, the patristic revival, and, closely linked with it, the revival of Biblical theology. (The two are inseparably connected, because any satisfactory Catholic Biblical theology must be based on the exegesis of the Fathers, with the modifications made necessary by the development of dogma and sound modern critical scholarship.) A remarkable sign of the times, which is likely to have far-reaching consequences, is the popularization and wide diffusion of the works of the Fathers in series like the great French *Sources Chrétiennes*<sup>2</sup> and the *Bibliothèque Augustinienne*,<sup>3</sup> the German translation of St. Augustine,<sup>4</sup> and two excellent series of English translations published in America and Ireland, *The Fathers of the Church*<sup>5</sup> and *Ancient Christian Writers*.<sup>6</sup> (*Sources Chrétiennes* is, of course, very much more than a popularization; some of its volumes are among the most impressive works of scholarship that the patristic revival has produced.) And historical studies of the theology of the Fathers are beginning to abound

<sup>1</sup> 2nd Edition *Editions du Cerf*, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> *Editions du Cerf*.

<sup>3</sup> Desclée de Brouwer.

<sup>4</sup> Schöningh, Paderborn.

<sup>5</sup> Cima, New York.

<sup>6</sup> Catholic University of America and Mercier Press, Cork.

which combine sound learning with an awareness of that theology as something living and by no means of merely historical interest. The part played by the Society of Jesus in this patristic revival and in the wider movement of thought of which we are speaking is very noteworthy. Besides the much-discussed work of Père de Lubac, in which the impact of the patristic revival on speculative theology is most vividly perceptible, we have the work of Père Daniélou and Fr. von Balthasar on the Greek Fathers, notably on Origen, St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Maximus the Confessor, and a number of valuable articles on Biblical theology according to the Fathers in *Dieu Vivant* and elsewhere. Père P. Henry, besides his great services to Plotinian scholarship, has produced in *La Vision d'Ostie*<sup>1</sup> a commentary worthy of the greatest chapter in the *Confessions*. There are many other names which should be mentioned, but this essay is showing signs of degenerating into a bibliography. Nor would it be fair to suggest that there is anything exclusively Jesuit about the patristic revival, in spite of the pre-eminence of Jesuit scholarship in this field. All the Orders, with secular clergy and laymen and women, are engaged in the movement in France, and the controversies which have arisen have by no means taken the form of disputes between the Orders. In England we still lag behind in the field of patristic scholarship, but the general tendency of thought which the patristic revival is doing so much to help forward is worthily represented by a Benedictine, Dom Iltyd Trethowan, in his recently published *Certainty*.<sup>2</sup> It is having a very considerable effect, too, outside the Catholic community, as we can see in Dr. Farrer's most impressive and attractive Bampton Lectures, *The Glass of Vision*.<sup>3</sup>

The patristic revival is, of course, doing very much more than reinforce the tendency to a more intuitive and contemplative way of thinking. It is having a fertilizing influence on the whole field of Catholic thinking, especially perhaps on the theology of the Mass, the Sacraments and the Church. But it certainly is most powerfully reinforcing this tendency, because the thought of the Fathers is itself intuitive and contemplative. St. Augustine and the great Greek Fathers are men with philosophically trained minds, with nothing naïve or immature about them. They are not emotionalists or mentally undisciplined, and there is plenty of hard thinking in their writings. But the thought is contem-

<sup>1</sup> Vrin, 1938.

<sup>2</sup> Dacre Press, 1948.

<sup>3</sup> Dacre Press, 1948.

plative rather than discursive. They are looking at an object, the Christian Mystery, and trying to describe it rather than solving problems. They are "Platonic" rather than "Aristotelian" in their way of thinking, and that is precisely why they respond so well to the intellectual needs of religious men at the present time. It looks as if we were at the beginning (and still only at the beginning) of a very far-reaching transformation of Catholic thought which has already gone a long way in leading us back from a too exclusively Aristotelian and discursive approach to something much more like the ancient but still very living thought of the Fathers by which the greatest Catholic philosophers and theologians, including St. Thomas himself, have always been nourished and to which, perhaps, the thought of the ordinary devout and intelligent Catholic has always remained closer than the official text-books would suggest.

A period of transformation like this is always a period of crisis and conflict, and the situation is one which needs delicate and intelligent handling. Any attempt to repress free discussion or to force men's minds back into ways of thinking according to which they do not and cannot think any longer might have utterly disastrous results. On the other side a mere fashionableness in the current existentialist mode would be equally unsatisfactory. The patristic revival ought to save us from this: but patrolatry will serve our turn no better than Thomolatry. An attempted return to the thought of the Fathers which took no account of later developments in theology and philosophy would be as hopelessly unreal as Gothic Revival architecture. And the vast and complex thought-world of the Fathers is a particularly unsuitable subject for indiscriminating enthusiasm. If we are going to think Platonically and contemplatively we must at least be clear in our minds about the differences between pagan and Christian Platonism. The detailed historical work of showing how the Fathers dealt with, criticized and transformed pagan Platonism to suit their authentically Christian purposes has been admirably done in the literature referred to above.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this essay is to draw some general conclusions about the differences

<sup>1</sup> The following are particularly valuable from this point of view. Daniélou, J., *Platonisme et Théologie Mystique* (on St. Gregory of Nyssa), Aubier, 1944, and Origène, *La Table Ronde*, 1948. Balthasar, H. von, *Présence et Pensée*, Beauchesne, 1942. Henry P., *La Vision d'Ostie*, Vrin, 1938, and E. Ivanka's *Hellenisches und Christliches im Frühbyzantinischen Geistesleben*, Herder, 1948.

between pagan and Christian Platonic contemplation which are of importance, as will appear, for our own thought to-day.

We shall need to start with some working definitions of "contemplation" and "Platonism." By "contemplation" is here meant the direct encounter of the mind with being, created or uncreated. This definition is wide enough to cover both natural and supernatural contemplation. But we must keep carefully separate in our minds the clear contemplation which can be spoken of in metaphors of sight and light and the obscure and oblique though immediate awareness (St. Augustine's *contuitio*) which in this life, except perhaps for rare foretastes of the Beatific Vision at the highest level of supernatural contemplation, is the only direct encounter our mind can have with the uncreated being of God. Short of the Beatific Vision, the Christian Platonist must say, our clear contemplation is an encounter of the mind with created beings only, signs of Being, not with God, Being Himself: but because our clear contemplation is accompanied, in a way really impossible to describe in terms of anything else, by the obscure awareness of God in Himself we know that the signs are signs of God and are conscious of Him present in them. And this obscure awareness is the foundation of that supernatural contemplation which, though remaining "dark" in this life may carry some beyond signs altogether.

By "Platonism" we must understand, not one of the many versions of the thought of Plato as interpreted by modern scholars, but the Platonism which the Fathers knew, in which their minds were trained and with which they wrestled to bring it into the service of Christ: that is, the Middle Platonism of the first two centuries A.D. and the early Neo-Platonism of Plotinus and Porphyry. It is, above all, the thought of Plotinus and the Fathers' dealings with it, that must be central in any account of Christian Platonism. In so far as the Fathers knew Plato's own writings they understood them (by no means always wrongly or absurdly) according to the Middle Platonist and Neo-Platonist interpretations.

We may now go on to consider the great differences between pagan Platonic and Christian contemplation, differences about which we must be clear if we are to appreciate and use the thought of the Fathers and develop for ourselves a really Christian contemplative way of thinking. The first disagreement between



pagans and Christians which we must consider is about the supreme object of contemplation and its accessibility. For the pagan Platonist the world of divine and eternal Ideas is the normal home of the human intellect, and that intellect is itself divine in a subordinate degree. Thus the highest contemplation is available to man by his own natural powers without the help of any divine grace, even if it can only be attained very rarely in this life, and only by a small minority of trained philosophers. Plotinus here made an important advance on his Middle Platonist predecessors with his sharp distinction between the Divine Mind which is the place of the Ideas and its and their transcendent source, the One or Good, which is no longer accessible by a properly intellectual act but only in ecstasy. But Plotinus states much more clearly than his predecessors that the natural abode of the human intellect is in the World of Ideas in the Divine Mind, of which it is a part, and he seems normally to think even of the final ascent to the One in ecstasy as something which man accomplishes by his own powers and not by any sort of grace.

For the Christian, on the other hand, the supreme object of contemplation, which alone can satisfy the mind of man as God has made him, is God Himself, who is absolutely inaccessible to the natural powers of the intellect even of the greatest philosopher. The Vision of God can be attained only by supernatural grace. In pagan Platonism there is, strictly speaking, no supernatural. But this supernatural vision is accessible to all to whom God wills to reveal Himself and give His Grace, stupid or intelligent, cultured or uncultured. This has practical consequences of enormous and immediate importance. For the pagan Platonist the philosopher and the philosopher alone stood at the head of the hierarchy of humanity. If divine contemplation was only accessible to the philosophically trained intellect then there could be no saint who was not also a sage: and the philosopher alone had that highest knowledge which gave a natural right to rule the community. Further, this exaltation of the philosopher provided an excellent theoretical justification for the Hellenic despising of manual labour as "banausic." If the way to God lies only through philosophy, and philosophy means the elaborate intellectual discipline of Platonism and not the simple practice of virtue to which some late Stoic teachers like Musonius Rufus reduced it, then all ways of life which are unsuited to the study



of philosophy are inferior and degrading. But for the Christian the philosopher, and even the theologian, does not hold a position of such absolute supremacy in the community of redeemed humanity, the Church. Philosophers and theologians have a high dignity and an indispensable function, but they are not the only saints or the only rightful rulers. It is eminently desirable that bishops should be also saints and theologians. St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Augustine, St. Anselm, and the other great canonized bishop-theologians represent the ideal ordering of things, and one which it is urgently necessary that we should recognize as an ideal and try to work towards as far as is in our power. But saint, theologian and bishop remain distinct functions, and there have been very many saints who have not possessed philosophically trained or trainable intellects. Philosophy and scientific theology do not provide the only way to the God who lived on earth as a carpenter and who gives His grace to people of the most "banausic" occupations. There is a disposition of the intellect necessary for living the Christian life, and there are ways of life which obstruct it, but Christian contemplation is not confined to philosophers and no work or way of life can hinder it which respects the being of things and does not stimulate concupiscence.

After Origen's unsatisfactory attempt to state the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in terms of the pagan Platonist hierarchy of being, with the Second Person as the place of the Ideas, relatively multiple and inferior to the transcendent unity of the Father, the great "Platonist" Fathers decisively and consciously rejected the idea of degrees of divinity, and consequently placed the Ideas in the infinite transcendent unity of the Divine Being. This has vitally important consequences, not fully worked out by the Fathers, which the present writer has tried to indicate elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> It means that there is not, as Plotinus thought, a spiritual world distinct both from God and from the world of sense-experience which is the proper home of the human intellect and in which it finds the normal objects of its contemplation. For us the creative Ideas, the true Platonic Forms, are the infinite plenitude of the Divine Substance and our only vision of them will be in the Beatific Vision. In this life we must find the

<sup>1</sup> In an article, *The Relevance of Plotinus in the Downside Review*, Spring, 1949, and in an Aquinas Paper (No. 11).

normal objects of our contemplation in the beings given to us in sense-experience by seeing them precisely as beings, that is, created participations in the Divine Being, signs of God, images of the creative Ideas. We shall return to this when we come to consider the relations of soul and body in pagan Platonic and Christian contemplation. But we may note here the very important place which this way of looking at contemplation leaves for the discursive reason. This has the function of setting in order the images given in intuitive contemplation and noting their common characteristics by abstraction, so that we may be aware of God more fully in their harmony than by considering them in isolation or chaotically. And it has the still more important function of criticizing the images, of showing how they fail to represent adequately the transcendent plenitude of Divine Being. The discursive activity of the mind is thus indispensable, though it cannot replace the intuitive contemplation on which it must be founded.

The second great difference between pagan and Christian Platonism, which is closely linked with the first, concerns the way of contemplation. For the pagan Platonist it is a solitary way. The rare individual whose natural endowments and training make him capable of the highest philosophy rises alone through the levels of being of a static universe to the divine contemplation to which his divine nature entitles him. The philosopher who has attained to the highest vision will certainly have duties to his fellow-men. Plato in his teaching and Plotinus in his life made that very clear. But he will not attain his goal through his membership of a universal community and his attainment of it will not affect or be affected by the everlasting, unchanging course of the universe or the unending cycles of human life. In the pagan Platonist universe there is no real history and nothing really decisive ever happens. But the Christian's ascent to the goal of contemplation, the vision of God, is part of the life of a community journeying to a definite end, the enjoyment of that vision by all its members in unity, which is also the consummation of the history of the universe. Christianity is a community religion and a historical religion, and it is a historical religion because it is a community religion.<sup>1</sup> The whole purpose of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Daniélou, *The Salvation of the Nations*, Sheed and Ward, 1949, and *Déluge, Baptême, Jugement, Dieu Vivant* 8.

history of the universe is the building up of the Pleroma, the fullness of the Body of Christ, and history has only continued after the first coming of Christ, the end of the universe is only delayed, to give time for the preaching of the Gospel, the bringing of all who are to be saved into that Body. The Christian contemplative's end, and his vocation to that end, are fully personal to himself and he has his unique personal value on earth and in heaven. But his whole contemplative life is lived in the community. He is led by the revelation of which the community is guardian and expounder. The grace on which he depends comes from the community's Sacrifice and sacraments (even if he does not consciously see that it does). And his growth in supernatural life benefits the whole community and contributes to the work of the apostolate (even if no-one at the time understands exactly how). And the final end to which he looks is not temporary or permanent translation to a higher level of being in a static, everlasting universe, but the end of history, the new heaven and the new earth, the restoration of all things in Christ.

The third great point of difference between pagan Platonists and Christians about contemplation concerns the relationship of soul and body. Pagan Platonic contemplation is disembodied, the contemplation of a soul transcending and detaching itself from the body in which it lodges. Christian contemplation is embodied, the contemplation of a man who is a unity of soul and body. The historical development here is interesting. Christianity was, of course, from the beginning the religion of the Incarnation and its extension in the Sacraments and the whole life of the visible Church. It is because it is the religion of the Incarnation that it is a historical and community religion. The great "Platonist" Fathers, the Cappadocians and St. Augustine, were very well aware of this, and of the essential opposition of Christian thought to pagan Platonism which it involved. It was they who fixed for all time the outlines of the Christian understanding of history of which we have just spoken, and we are only beginning to understand again the richness of their thought about the Church and the Sacraments. But they did not arrive at a satisfactory philosophical theory of the relationship of soul and body (though they sometimes seem to be coming very near to it). That began to appear with St. Thomas, and not before him: and recent studies of Thomist epistemology suggest that, especially as

regards embodied contemplation, everything is not as clear and satisfactory in Thomism as it ought to be, and that there is room for further original thinking on the subject. But whatever the defects of the Thomist epistemology it seems clear that we must base our thinking at this point on Thomist philosophical psychology rather than the Platonist psychology which the Fathers accepted. It was the tremendous strength of the Platonic conviction that body can contribute nothing really useful to the life of soul which accounted for this delay in development. It was a delay by no means to be regretted in this way, that it resulted in the clear and firm establishment of the truth of the absolute primacy of intellect or spirit in the body-soul unity which is man. The Platonism of the Fathers has been and still is a most powerful corrective for the easy practical materialism of fallen man which admits the existence of spiritual things while acting on the assumption that only material things really matter (in contemporary Catholic terms, that while the Beatific Vision is no doubt the end of man, etc., etc., what really matters is getting as many Catholic representatives as possible onto the County Council).

Christian contemplation then is embodied but fully spiritual, the true encounter of the intellect in and through the body, with the intelligible through which it can find God. This means that, as we have seen, the intellect finds the objects of its contemplation in the world of sense-experience and not in some transcendent spiritual world. When our minds bear on beings as beings, are aware of their goodness, and reflect on the truth of our thoughts of them, we are conscious of them as created participations of eternal Being, signs of God: for being, truth and goodness are only understandable as participations in the eternal of which we are aware. The ascent to this contemplation within the world of sense-experience requires all that disciplining of our fallen instincts, that insistence on the primacy of the intellect and of spiritual things, that re-ordering of our whole individual and corporate life, which the ascetical tradition of Christian Platonism sets before us. It offers no way of escape into an easy humanism. We have to make the choice between the two ways of looking at and dealing with created beings, the earthly or worldly which regards them as raw material to be exploited to give us power or satisfaction and the contemplative

which regards them as the way to God. We shall have, if we are to be Christian contemplatives, to learn again those ancient doctrines which are the nursery commonplaces of every great religious and philosophical tradition and are fully accepted and reiterated by the great Christian thinkers of the past, but are often forgotten by contemporary Catholic publicists: that the way to happiness even in this world is by cutting down our desires, not by multiplying techniques to satisfy them (which is an endless process as desire for earthly things once let loose always outruns the present possibilities of satisfying it): that higher, and above all, spiritual, goods must always be bought by the sacrifice of lesser goods: and that the whole creation is sacred, a collection of means to find and worship God and not of material to exploit to satisfy ourselves.

If we adopted this way of Christian contemplation it would necessarily effect a radical transformation of our work and of our whole civilization. Christians and pagan Platonists agree that contemplation and work are or should be inseparably linked. The human soul has a double orientation, towards the contemplation of spiritual things and the ordering and perfecting of the material universe. But the kind of work which springs from contemplation is very different from the work which has made our own civilization what it is, which is really exploitation in the service of concupiscence. The contemplative, when he has done his duty of providing for his own material needs, austere conceived according to his state of life, and those of all to whom he has obligations of justice or charity, will use his remaining energy and resources for creation (in the limited sense proper to man) not for exploitation. He will always in all his work respect the being of the things he works with, seeing in them already signs of God in their own right and aiming to bring out their unrealized potentialities, to make them better beings, more real, more signs of God than before, which will be for his own good and that of his fellow-men. This was, more often unconsciously, perhaps, than consciously, the ideal of work which inspired the men of traditional religious civilizations, with all their shortcomings, and accounts for the beauty of the great majority of their products as contrasted with the ugliness which is the particular distinguishing mark of our own civilization, and which springs from the mentality of exploitation. The state we are in at present, and



what seem to be fairly well founded anticipations of universal food shortage and atomic warfare in the not too distant future, may suggest doubts whether the change-over from contemplation to exploitation has been a profitable one, even in the most material sense. There can, however, be very little doubt that it has been disastrous from the point of view of religion. Supernatural religion in our civilization has become the concern of a relatively small minority, and is likely to remain so as long as our civilization lasts (increases in the number or improvements in the quality of the minority should not lead us into delusions that we are about to convert the world): and the basic reason for this seems to the present writer to be the loss of the spirit of contemplation. The return to contemplation with which this essay has been concerned may perhaps mark the first beginnings of the preparation for a new, as yet very far distant, Christian civilization. It certainly seems likely to make a return to supernatural religion easier for a great number of individuals, and is already improving the quality of the life and thinking of many of the religious minority. But there is still plenty of hard work, historical study and original thinking (not without controversy), to be done before all our Catholic thought is inspired by the wisdom of the Fathers and based on a contemplation which respects the body and history, lives in the life of the Church, despises material satisfactions while loving God's creation for His sake, and looks humbly to His supernatural grace for its end.



# LIAM O'FLAHERTY:

## A STORY OF DISCONTENT

By

BENEDICT KIELY

**L**IAM O'FLAHERTY, who is among the more notable talents that contemporary Ireland has given to the writing of fiction in English, was born on the Aran Islands off the Galway coast in 1897. He says himself: "I was born on a storm-swept rock and hate the soft growth of sun-baked lands where there is no frost in men's bones. Swift thought and the swift flight of ravenous birds, and the squeal of terror of hunted animals are to me reality. I have seen the leaping salmon fly before the salmon whale, and I have seen the sated buck horn his mate, and the wanderer leave his wife in search of fresh bosoms, with the fire of joy in his eye."

His origins were, thus, in peasant Ireland and his contemporary, Sean O'Faolain in the course of a B.B.C. talk on O'Flaherty's work once maintained that anybody approaching Irish literature should call to mind at once the unconventionality of Irish life. "The basic thing about Ireland," O'Faolain said, "is that it is a peasant country. What we call 'polite society,' with its firmly established and clearly defined conventions and rules, amounting, or mounting, to punctilio, exists in Ireland only in enclaves: little islands of convention besieged by the darkness of the peasant mind." To find the exact relationship between that argument and the truth about life in Ireland would call for a lengthy consideration of the work of Sean O'Faolain—which is not now my purpose. But it can be taken, generally, as truth and it has a valid bearing on the work of O'Flaherty. For when O'Flaherty wrote a biography of a notable Irish politician, who was once a character in the House of Commons, he said: "though Tim Healy was endowed by nature with great gifts and great potentialities, his mind was a plastic mould, a pool of clear water that reflected all

the ghoulis figures that stood over it, menacing, murmuring incantations, howling about devils, raising a great noise that was deafening."

This means, more or less, that, according to Liam O'Flaherty, Tim Healy had the mind of the Irish peasant, with the addition of those great gifts and potentialities. On one side of the pool of clear water stood the priest and on the other the patriot, menacing and gesturing above the mirror of the water until the present was hopelessly confused with the past and the pool became stagnant. O'Flaherty himself, like a very large number of young Irishmen, was for a while the gesturing patriot and might easily have developed into the menacing priest. When he was sent to school there was a hope that he might develop a vocation for the priesthood and he went through two Catholic colleges, and passed on to University College, Dublin; he served in the first World War and was invalided out of service in 1918, and after about four years wandering the world he sat down seriously to writing. In 1925 with his novel *The Informer* he won the James Tait Black Prize.

The truth in his estimate of Tim Healy is badly shaken by his estimate of himself as a realist from the stormswept rock, a man whose god is not the god of romance, who professed once upon a time to see the Roman empire and the British empire and Joseph Conrad's attachment to the British empire as "sweet singing on a lower plane." His own personal preferences are, according to himself, for battle and blood, for Genghiz and his herds of camels and hosts of horsemen and jewelled concubines, for the storming of Troy and the war for the bull of Cuailgne, for "all the terrible madresses of men and women crashing their bodies and their minds against the boundary walls of human knowledge."

A man knows his own heart better than his neighbour does, and his description of his heart's desire must be accepted. But it is a good way from description to definition, and the concubines, particularly the ones with the jewels, of Genghiz, and the men who fought a war at a queen's command for the possession of a brown bull, all live well within the bailiwick of the god of romance. And there is a resemblance between the way in which Troy was taken and the way in which empires increase and multiply and fill the earth. And there is nobody in the world so

hopefully and unreasonably romantic as the man who leaves his wife and sets out on a tour of alien bosoms. And the man from the stormswept rock journeying to visit the world is blood brother to the boy who walked across a valley towards the house with the golden windows.

## II

The journey from the rock to the world has resulted in about twenty books: novels including *Thy Neighbour's Wife* (1923), *The Black Soul* (1924), *The Informer* (1925), *Mr. Gilhooley* (1926), *The Assassin* (1928), *Skerrett* (1932), *Famine* (1937), *Land* (1946); four collections of short stories: *Spring Sowing* (1924), *The Tent* (1926), *The Mountain Tavern* (1929), and *Two Lovely Beasts* (1948); three volumes of autobiography or itinerary: *Two Years* (1930), *I Went to Russia* (1931), *Shame the Devil* (1934); a biography of Tim Healy; a tragedy written as if meant for the stage, and a small book of fantasy called *A Tourist's Guide to Ireland*. Like most good fantasy it has its connection with the truth, but it should have, like Thackeray's *Book of Snobs*, borne the explanation: by one of themselves. The ideas it contains obviously occurred to the islandman when he was on his way from the island to which he belonged to the world he wanted to see through another island to which he did not belong. The accident of Ireland's nearness to Aran has meant that much of O'Flaherty's comment on and interpretation of life has been affected by life as he saw it lived when he was a tourist in Ireland. His method has always been a little like the wind blowing over his native rock. His conclusions have frequently been shaped by ideas picked up hurriedly in the big world beyond the two islands.

When he wrote the biography of Tim Healy he seemed firmly convinced that on his way through Ireland he had made himself unpopular with the Irish people. To prove his worthiness as a biographer he claimed he had two things in common with Healy: neither had any connection with the whisky and stout trade; each in his own time had managed to make himself the most unpopular man in Ireland. The claim was absurdly extravagant. On O'Flaherty's own classification politicians made up one of the four main divisions of the Irish people; the other three divisions

were composed of priests, publicans, and peasants. After Sadleir and Keogh Tim Healy was probably Ireland's most unpopular politician; and writers and artists could never aspire to such unpopularity for the simple reason that the majority of the Irish people didn't even know they existed. O'Flaherty came very close to recognizing that depressing truth—depressing to writers and artists—when he said: "it is clearly understood, among Irish audiences, that it is the proper thing, when a politician boasts about his services to the people, for the audience to cheer in derision. We laugh at one another in true Greek fashion; but, unlike the Greeks, we do not allow our artists to laugh at us." Now the small minority of the Irish people who were aware, to the extent of attentively reading his books, that a man from the neighbouring island of Aran had passed that way, could read that passage and wonder why Liam O'Flaherty didn't laugh if he wanted to laugh, why at certain terrible moments it looked as if the man had never laughed in his life.

The explanation was that a shout rather than a laugh fitted in better with the roar of the romantic wind and the sea glorious in anger against the great rocks. Like the artist in his story *The Child of God* he was discovering that he must be aggressive because only aggressiveness would preserve him from the moment he had longed for in distant London when he would see "those beloved faces once more, touch these toil-worn hands, hear these voices, of which he knew every delicate intonation, kiss those lips that murmured when he kissed them, maternal lips that crooned to him as a child." With loud shouts O'Flaherty has tried to drown the voice of some such moment speaking in his blood. He has never quite succeeded.

### III

When he was a boy at school, he says, the master asked the class to write a story. Little Liam wrote a story about a peasant woman who had the misfortune to be murdered by her husband. At that very early age the writer in him showed a preference for the decisive gesture, and, after a good hanging, a good murder is as decisive as anything anybody knows. This particular murder was done in the field where the man was working, and the motive was his natural anger at his wife for bringing him cold tea for

his dinner. The large number of people who like their tea hot will see the point immediately.

Anyway, it was with a spade he did it; and when the woman was securely murdered the husband was confronted with the problem that commonly confronts murderers. He had to dispose of the body, so he tried to bury his late wife in the fosse, or furrow, between two ridges. "The point of the story," O'Flaherty writes, "was the man's difficulty in getting the woman, who was very large, to fit into the fosse. The schoolmaster was horrified and thrashed me."

That delectable little murder story has a Gallic realism that would not be out of place in a film by Marcel Carné, and with a few unnatural complications and an urban background it would fit into the later novels of Georges Simenon. But the story of the thrashing in the schoolhouse is pure romanticism, in the debased sense in which romanticism can mean either that a man's memory is failing or that he is bending the long bow. The schoolmaster who, apparently, had the originality to depart from autobiographies of old boots, or essays on coal mines or frosty mornings or days in the city, would certainly have welcomed the originality of a pupil who posed not only the problem that faces the best murderers, but also the problem that has been solved only by the very best realists: the problem of how to get rid of the body. If little Liam was thrashed—and it is very likely that he was—the reason must have been bad spelling or insubordination or making faces at the parish priest.

The realistic novelist, in what I imagine is the correct meaning of an adjective based on a substantive whose meaning is always in dispute, quietly watches his people in their environment and accepts without excitement the good and evil evident in the people and the environment. He can descend, if it is a descent, to the reportage that makes Zola's *Germinal* so vividly horrifying. He can ascend to the place where he becomes one with the movement of his people, with their feelings, until ultimately he is their voice speaking with conviction and with infinite patience. Modern Irish fiction provides two convenient examples in Michael McLaverty's *The Three Brothers* and in O'Flaherty's *Famine*. Now, O'Flaherty has professed a supreme contempt for the literary achievement of the north-eastern corner of Ireland, a contempt written into words nearly twenty years ago and



founded on nothing more reliable than the misapprehension that Mr. St. John Ervine was another name for Belfast. But very far apart from Mr. St. John Ervine and the Orange processions that the Aranman condemned so whole-heartedly, the north-eastern corner has produced in this half century two novelists, Shan F. Bullock and Michael McLaverty, who had certain advantages over O'Flaherty in observing and recording the movement of men and women on the mainland of Ireland. They do not get excited, or roar, or recklessly proffer remedies. O'Flaherty does: pardonably in scenes where men make love to women or sometimes women make love to men; less pardonably when he philosophizes for pages about men and women and the millions (with acknowledgments to Saroyan) alive on the earth; unpardonably when he laces on his hobnails, takes his shillelagh in one hand and his caubeen in the other, goes leppin' on his native rocks and daring all comers. This may be romanticism or fantasy or anything you like to call it. It is found at its best or worst in the one hundred and thirty pages of Donnybrook Fair that make up *A Tourist's Guide to Ireland*. It has moments when the reader is treated to the fantastic spectacle of a Connachtman beating the Orange drum, or the fantasist fighting with his own fantasies, or the romanticist creating his own world and then refusing to find it good.

The dreamer grumbling with dissatisfaction at his own dreams is the funniest, most pitiable object on God's earth, because his own fancies oppress him with a weight heavier than all the woes of the world. He is as pitiable as Dark Daniel in O'Flaherty's one quaint stage-play *Darkness* when he says: "I have no kinship with people. I'm an ungainly lout."

#### IV

O'Flaherty, whether he knows it or not, has always had a certain amount of trouble with Dark Daniel intruding himself where, artistically, he isn't wanted. His novels are never completely clear of the influence of that morose and ungainly man, with the one exception of *Famine*. But then *Famine* is protected by the presence of Thomsy Hynes.

Not only has the Dark Daniel side of O'Flaherty's genius as little kinship with people as the dark side of the moon, but it is



divorced from contact with nature. His short stories about life on the earth apart from man, and the passages of pure praise here and there in the novels are always on a higher level than most of what he has written about his two-legged fellows. It is not that he has brought men and women down to the level of animals. But he has not always managed to raise his man and woman to the place where his animals move in fierce and tameless beauty, to make his men and women worthy of the earth. O'Flaherty's birds and beasts are the perfect children of the earth and, as a rule, the harmony of their movement on the earth is disturbed only by the invasion of man. The earth circling in space, the winds and the sea changing and the seasons changing can be for O'Flaherty such an absolute harmony that it has the power of almost always drawing with it the birds and beasts and sometimes even the men and women. That roughly was the theme of the novel *The Black Soul* in which a war-scarred world-scarred man—Dark Daniel to the ends of his broken nails—returns to Inverara to find peace: "As soon as he tried to abandon himself to nature his cynical intellect jeered at him . . . 'what a cursed thing is intellect!' he groaned."

His cursed intellect and his black soul both submit to the spell of spring in Inverara, yet it is a pity that the central portion of the submission is an unconvincing intrigue with his landlady. The reader who is not as utter a romantic as O'Flaherty himself can only feel that return to the world with the beautiful little Mary, after the convenient passing of her useless husband, is as final a solution as the reunion at the end of a Hollywood divorce story. What Inverara really had to offer was something almost on the level of one of the poems of Saint Francis, with the difference that spring on the island pointed the way to the solution at which Franciscan canticles, and a poetic treatise by Saint Robert Bellarmine, had already arrived. In his best moments O'Flaherty is vaguely conscious of this and can write: "Life, life, life, and the labour of strong hands in Inverara in spring. From dawn to dark the people hurried, excitedly opening the earth to sow. At dawn they came from their cabins, their noses shining with frost, slapping their lean hands under their armpits, their blue eyes hungry with energy. They ran through the smoking dew for their horses. From dawn to dark their horses trotted, neighing, their steel shoes ringing on the smooth stones. Through rain and

driven sleet the people worked. Cows gave birth to calves, and the crooning of women milking in the evening mingled dreamily with the joyous carolling of the birds. Yellow lambs staggered by their mothers' sides as they made their first trembling journeys in life. Lean goats were hiding their new-born kids in the crevices among the crags. Everything moved hungrily for life. Even the grey limestone crags seemed to move as the sun sucked the dew from their backs. Smoke rose everywhere, as if nature perspired conceiving life."

In that magnificent passage the aggressive islander recognizes peace as something far away from his own mood, when he unwisely damned Conrad for weaving a cloak of romance out of space, and when he shouted that some sort of "brutal denial" was necessary. In the romanticism of brutal denial he claimed that what was beautiful in man was that he was unhappy as a man and wished to be a god, "to be free from death and the restraint of the earth's balance," to fly into space and loot the universe, to hanker always after the tree of knowledge, to create gods only in order to break them, to be constantly in revolt and finding beauty in tragedy. It all depends on what you mean by beauty. But even if the story of the fall of the angels was nothing more than a story, the men who told it were wiser than Liam O'Flaherty—or John Milton. They knew that Lucifer was only glorious with light when he sat without pride in his appointed place. After the fall he was pathetic as evil can sometimes be pathetic and as exploded pride is always pathetic—as pathetic as the ludicrous Raoul Henry St. George in *Land* telling his sister that he is a free-thinker and that she is not to force him to be brutal by interfering with his conduct in any way: "You know how cruel and uncompromising men of our family can be, when they feel that their authority is being flouted." The inane Raoul needs only a Gilbertian chorus of priests, peasants, publicans and politicians to shatter the air with ironical repetition: "He says he may be brutal. He says the men of his family have always been cruel and uncompromising."

## V

Thomsy Hynes, the greatest character in *Famine*, is never brutal. He is degenerate and drunken and degraded. On the

eighteenth page of that novel he is introduced as a byword all over the Black Valley where mothers say to naughty children: "If you carry on like that you'll be another Thomsy Hynes when you grow." But in the abjection of Thomsy, O'Flaherty has laughed the most perfect laughter, as nervous as the needle of a compass and on the edge of cleansing tears; and in Thomsy's woeful odyssey and his final vision O'Flaherty has sketched the story of the soul of man. All this comes fittingly in his best novel with the spectacle of the tragedy in which a whole people almost perished detaching the writer from all fads and grudges and grumbles.

Thomsy exists on sufferance, having surrendered his rights in the land his father farmed to Brian Kilmartin who married his sister, Maggie Hynes. Brian's son, in due time, brings his own woman, Mary, under the roof, and Mary decides to clean the house. She procures a new frieze suit for Thomsy and orders him to wash himself before wearing it: and when Mary's man, Martin, forcibly washes him in hot water his screams are audible half-a-mile away. Judged casually and detached from its context that might be merely a vulgar incident, but balanced against the apocalyptic power of the whole story it can stand as symbolic of the cleansing of the never-very-willing soul. Thomsy, like all the other famine-stricken people, will go down before the death of the body, but he will never know despair. When Mary sends him north over the mountains to Mayo to search for Martin who is on his keeping he returns from his wandering in a land of desolation not knowing whether or not he had properly fulfilled his message. But sheltering in a barn one night he found hope when he heard a man of Young Ireland talking revolution to a circle of listeners: "Faith, it was fine talk, and it looked an easy job of work, the way he told it. He said there are millions of the poor and only a few of the rich, and if the poor got together and made themselves into a proper army, with a proper plan . . . they'd make short work of the tyrants . . . Begob, I could hold myself no longer in the straw, so I up and I cried: 'More power to you! That's the talk I like to hear.' Mary cried quietly as she listened to Thomsy's story, and she asked herself: "What had he brought back? Nothing but a tale told by a stranger man in a barn at night."

That is the wisest moment in all the books that Liam O'Flaherty

has written. It is a vision of raggedness and hunger leaping up to salute liberty or the hope of liberty, of love hungering for love and knowing the hollowness in the heart of hope, and knowing also that in the chronicle of man on earth no story has ever been told to the end.

## VI

Thomsy Hynes and all that he stands for in the writings of O'Flaherty is a million times more valuable than all the devils of pride in Raoul Henry St. George, or in the man with the black soul, or in MacDara in *The Assassin* or in Commandant Dan Gallagher in *The Informer*, or even in Mr. Gilhooley caught for terrible tragedy in the maze of city streets. It is unfair, perhaps, to rank Gilhooley with those others possessed by the ungainly lout of a devil whose name is Dark Daniel. For the tragedy of Gilhooley in the Dublin streets is as impressive as the tragedy of Skerrett, the schoolmaster, on the rocks of Nara. Not only are the two men, the schoolmaster who has trampled on all opposition and the retired engineer who has always lived a free life, great tragic figures, but their sombre situations could be paralleled in some of O'Flaherty's stories about animals whose existence has been tampered with to the point of tragedy. Skerrett breaks himself against unyielding obstacles. Gilhooley's tragedy is that of a wild spirit caught helplessly in inextricable toils. They are both worthy of the earth.

For Gilhooley as the worthy child of the earth the words of the drunken poet, Macaward, had significance. In the web of city streets the poet saw only death and corruption, and Gilhooley and himself living in the city were living a lie for they both belonged "only where there are green fields and birds and life, growing and dying and growing and dying, all the year round." Later on Gilhooley remembers in vain the wisdom of the proverb-making country people, and says: "but I have strayed a long way from the root; 'twould be a twisted, twisted path that leads back to it."

He never found his way back along that twisted path; and although the young artist in *The Child of God* did follow the path to the place he had once called home he found when the path ended that, because he had changed and his people had not

changed, home was no longer home. His welcome ended when the people discovered that what he called art they called dirty pictures and disrespect for the dead; and his visit ended with his mother kneeling to curse her unworthy son, and instead praying and weeping for him. That story is the centre of all the conflict in O'Flaherty's work. (The reader with a sense of humour may see the *reductio ad absurdum* of that idea in O'Flaherty's visit to Ireland in 1946, his bestowal of benison, in articles in *The Irish Press*, on the Gaelic revival, and the subsequent bestowal of the Dublin censorship's old-maidenly curse on the novel *Land* for being "in general tendency indecent.")

But on a more serious level than the present-day Gaelic revival or the Dublin literary censorship that story reveals Dark Daniel and Thomsy Hynes fighting for the soul of O'Flaherty. In spite of the facts that Aran is his island, that he is a rambling grumbling Connachtman, his soul has a great deal to do with the soul of Ireland.

## REVIEWS

### SHAPE WITHOUT FORM

*The Structure of Caroline Moral Theology. An Investigation of Principles,*  
by R. H. McAdoo (Longmans 12s 6d).

IN his preface the author takes us into his confidence about his quest for an apt title to cover his aim in making this book, which he avows was "an attempt to answer the double question. Is there a native Anglican moral theology, and if so, how much was it reformed and how much does it owe to scholastic influence?" The scope of this enquiry is evidently vast, and any serious attempt at an answer must be of great interest to the general student of history as well as to the theologian.

The matter could only be settled by a general historical survey of the teaching in morals which divines broadly representative of the Anglican Church sought to persuade and force men, women and children to accept, and by an effort to trace this teaching in its various parts to its sources. The investigation would seem to require also that at least as much attention be paid in the survey to practice as to principle, for in revolutionary periods practice tends in increased measure



to exert influence over principles, promoting in them change, definition, development and order.

Dr. McAdoo has read widely among the writings of those like-minded divines of the seventeenth century, who have come to be called conveniently, but somewhat vaguely, Caroline, and his book, written with an engaging enthusiasm and furnished with ample quotation, is a useful introduction to their thought and tradition. He devotes the bulk of the book, four out of six chapters, to the exposition of their teaching on certain questions fundamental to the discussion of morality, Law and Conscience, Conscience and Casuistry, Mortal and Venial Sin, and Repentance and Holiness. His readers will, however be at a loss to understand by what process of make-believe the author when he wrote his preface came to persuade himself that he had been facing in these chapters the very precise question quoted above, and that he was justified in choosing a title which suggested that he had put himself in a position to answer the main part of the question in the affirmative. A few foundations do not make a structure, nor does a discussion of the groundwork of Christian morality provide a moral theology, which must be an organized body of knowledge designed to guide action. It would seem evident that he has been too intent on finding support for cherished theological views to plan and carry through the historical research which was necessary to his ambitious enterprise.

An introductory chapter is devoted to the study of the Anglican approach to theology, and the idea of "approach" recurs throughout the book. Here we think that Dr. McAdoo strikes the right note, for all the historical indications point to the conclusion that at no time has the Anglican Church succeeded in getting beyond an approach to the subject of moral theology. In all these years no manual for the use of her clergy has appeared, and in these pages the author quotes with sympathy and approval a remark made by Canon Mortimer, a leading theologian, in his *Elements of Moral Theology*, published in 1947, where he expresses the hope that the book may afford a "starting-point, if only for disagreement, for the compilation of an Anglican manual."

This hope depends in its turn on other hopes that the Anglican Church may yet acquire lawful authority and a Canon Law, and that a spirit of unity should prevail among clergy and people. In his own thought, Dr. McAdoo reveals further obstacles. He makes it clear in several passages that he is possessed by unresolved doubts whether moral theology is a legitimate science owing to the fear that it may be abused to smother the pursuit of holiness with a narrow legalism, and whether Anglican divines would not be better occupied in trying to found a new "comprehensive science of preparing souls for heaven,"



an amalgam of ascetical and moral theology. He is even disposed to make a sweeping and airy claim to some supposed superiority in Anglicanism over the Roman Church in its "avoidance of the great mistake of separating moral and ascetic theology." He does not convince us, however, that he has entered sufficiently deeply into Catholic replies in this well-worn controversy with Protestants. As he is plainly less interested in history than in theology, it is hardly surprising that a corresponding doubt clouds his history, and that we are in the end left to our own devices to know whether or not the Caroline divines attempted to construct a moral theology.

A guard could have been set up against this confusion if more attention had been paid to the evidence of practice. Many efforts had been made in the late Middle Ages to adapt moral teaching to the changing needs of the times as a great output and wide circulation of *Summae* for the use of confessors and teachers throughout Europe bear witness. Had religion and the study of theology flourished, all this intellectual activity would doubtless have risen to the production of some great synthesis of moral doctrine to match the achievement of the thirteenth century in the realm of dogmatic theology. As it was, the breakdown of mediaeval civilization in the crisis of the Reformation brought much and great change in human circumstance and put many a troubled conscience in sore need of skilled moral teaching. It was no accident that during this period of emergency men used such terms as "cases of conscience," "case-divinity" and "practical divinity" to describe learning in this field. William Allen was the first Englishman to organize an intensive study of the subject of "cases of conscience" in planning the training of his Douai priests, of whom most were exiles from the Universities and many were to pledge their teaching with their blood. He worked to such effect that Sayer, a Cambridge man and later a Benedictine, became in a short time a leading moral theologian in Europe, and Campion could report as having gained currency in hostile Protestant London the saying "The Catholic pays his debts." There is much English "blood, sweat and tears" behind certain sober sections of Catholic moral theology. It was the news from England of the plight of the hunted and captured priest and his harbourer, of the layman faced with ruin for not taking oaths against his conscience or not attending his parish church, which prompted theologians all over Europe to pore over the works of Cyprian and Augustine and to write into their treatises many a page on such topics as civil obedience, lying, equivocation, the seal of confession, oaths, and the sharing in heretical worship.

To consciences perplexed by these and similar problems the Anglican divine could address no disinterested and dispassionate counsel, backed by contact with the rest of Christendom. Much traditional moral

teaching was of course retained and was even enforced through the administrative system of the Church courts, which continued to supervise the morals of the common people, especially in the countryside. But the Established Church wholly lacked the innate authority, which would allow it to co-ordinate, develop and apply traditional doctrine in a form suited to the changing circumstance of a revolution still in full progress. The attempt to assert such authority under royal patronage in a society permeated by reformed doctrine only served to aggravate bitter division and to foment civil war.

Fuller tells us what happened where men were still unwilling to trust to private judgment or to accept the comfortable Protestant doctrine that sin was a private matter between a man and his God. He says, "In Case-Divinity the Protestants are defective, for (save that a smith or two of late have built them forges and set up shop), we go down to our enemies to sharpen all our instruments, and are beholden to them for offensive and defensive weapons in cases of conscience." "Enemies" is the operative word and this enmity a poet of the age saw as of the panther for the hind. A Catholic reader cannot help being reminded of the comparison on occasion, as he watches Dr. McAdoo's approach to the Roman Church and her moral doctrine.

Dr. Cosin may have set out to reconstruct a theology which should be "Protestant and Reformed according to the Ancient Catholic Church," a phrase which appeals to the author, but sincere and earnest man that he was, when asked by Lady Falkland to hear her confession, Cosin excused himself "not being used to hearing confessions, but he said that he would take time to prepare himself for it by studying casuists in the country, whither he was going for the purpose to spend six months." We can be sure that Cosin, like many an Anglican divine then and since, who has been asked to give counsel in moral matters and who has been wisely unwilling to rely solely on his own judgment, consulted and derived support from the "probatu auctores" of the Roman Church.

Any advantage, however, which Caroline divines might have drawn from this quarter, was more than off-set by the constant necessity in which they found themselves of attacking and vilifying Catholic moral doctrine. Amongst them the Jansenist misrepresentation and denigration of this doctrine found complete and uncritical acceptance. It is to this fact that we must attribute much of the arrested development, the evasive inadequacy and the positive error in their teaching. There is no "via media" in Christian morals. A study of the attitudes taken to the oath of allegiance in the seventeenth century would provide a wealth of illustration on this head.

Dr. McAdoo describes the decline of religion and morality in the eighteenth century as "the Hanoverian blight" but decline had been

rapid, great and decisive throughout the preceding century. To Dryden the Anglican Church seemed "Nice in her choice of ill, though not of best." If the phrase sound harsh, it must be remembered that he witnessed with a poet's eye the passing of the Test Act and the career of Dr. Oates as "Saviour of the Nation." He did not need to see the day in 1714 when the Lord Chancellor of England, in ancient times the Keeper of the King's Conscience, justified the Revolution to the august assembly of Queen, Lords, and Commons, and declared to the satisfaction of all present the plain meaning of an Englishman's oath of allegiance to be "that, even while you are declaring resistance in all cases to be unlawful, you are of necessity understood to mean that resistance in some cases is lawful." In its most characteristic doctrine, Caroline divinity issued in a complete breakdown not only of morality but of reason, and never recovered from the discredit.

BASIL FITZGIBBON

#### POETRY GRIGSON

*Poetry of the Present*, an Anthology of the 'Thirties and After, compiled and introduced by Geoffrey Grigson (Phoenix 10s 6d).

EVERY anthology, especially an anthology of contemporary work, is, as Mr. Grigson recognizes, an act of faith. And "anthologies at least do something by extracting the poems out of the books which too few of us will buy." One can willingly concede that these "are some of them, some of the good poems of the time," and that "the representation follows, without being forced." A certain indulgence of faith, hope and charity is the necessary prerogative, nowadays indeed the prerequisite, of the anthologist; and one must be grateful for Mr. Grigson's selection and for his Introduction as an admirable aid to getting the recent past, present and future of modern poetry into some kind of perspective.

It is easy to agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Grigson in his adequately scathing dismissal of "the neo-Romantic, the Apocalyptic, the Barker and Thomas imagism." One regrets a lingering under the spell of Auden, "this magician," who "arches over all, and will long continue to do so"; and a failure to recognize that the "weakening of the penicillin in which one had trusted," the lapse into Surrealism, was an inevitable complement to fundamental inadequacies in the Auden antidote itself. As a corollary to the spellbound blindness there is a

tendency to repudiate the relevance and "viability" of Eliot's achievement, based on a too facile acceptance of Auden's distinction between being "passionately in love with language" and being "unhappily in love with God."

The poetry of the early 'thirties was the voice of the Antagonist, proclaiming the "time for the destruction of error," a general assault on "creeds outworn," the bourgeois "ideas of safety"; it sprang from an acute sense of what was rotten in the state of Denmark. But it was the voice of one who was himself too deeply involved in the intellectual, emotional, and material unhealthiness he was diagnosing; the voice of one who had rejected, joined opposing team, but still the voice of a son, whose Freudian perceptions were a kind of guilty knowledge. And "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?" The powerful negative impulses were not balanced by any sense of "blood connection," of genuine human sympathy, or of the value of tradition, which render the creative achievements of Lawrence and Eliot, inadequate though they may be, a more valid, because more implicit, "criticism of life." After the "death, death of the grain, our death, Death of the old gang," Auden desired us to "Publish each healer that in city lives, Or country houses at the end of drives; Harrow the house of the dead; look shining at New styles of architecture, a change of heart"; and "We must love one another or die."

But to make this kind of recognition effective at the level not of religious or political pamphleteering but of poetry, called for an intense *discipline* of self searching, self control, the enormous spiritual and technical labour of "having to construct something upon which to rejoice." Auden's generation had, it soon appeared, "shot its bolt"; and since the Ariel poems, and the "Four Quartets," it is difficult to see how Eliot's "driving discreetly but ruthlessly over the bones of the dead, and making them minister again to poetic life" can be neatly dissociated from questions of technique, or from any conditions of "viability" prevailing at all in the world of modern poetry. "Falling in love with language is given, not chosen," but there still remains the "Trying to learn to use words," "the intolerable wrestle with words and meanings." Auden has become a "formal, verbal, musical cultivator" of brilliant ingenuity, and little more; he has begun himself "to proliferate upon a mere ability to read and write."

It may be rash to assert that, for poetry generally, the "years of l'entre deux guerres" have been years "largely wasted." It does seem certain that World War II marks the close of an episode, in poetry as well as in history—for in the 'thirties the two were forced into an illicit intimacy. And now Auden's generation are left "Wandering lost upon the mountains of our choice," and "as an artist feels his power gone, These walk the earth and know themselves defeated."

our road  
 Gets worse, and we seem altogether  
 Lost as our theories, like the weather,  
 Veer round completely every day,  
 And all that we can always say  
 Is: true democracy begins  
 With free confession of our sins. . . .

We need to love all since we are  
 Each a unique particular  
 That is no giant, god, or dwarf,  
 But one odd human isomorph;  
 We can love each because we know  
 All, all of us, that this is so. . . .

The poverty of this is a pathetic comment on "We must love one another or die." "For the warm, nude ages of instinctive poise, For the taste of joy in the innocent mouth" we can only sigh. Of "the glorious balls of the future; [where] each intricate maze Has a plan, and the disciplined movements of the heart Can follow for ever and ever its harmless ways" we can only dream. For the time being, "we are articulated to error," "We live in freedom by necessity," and can only implore the "sudden Wind that blows unbidden" to

Instruct us in the civil art  
 Of making from the muddled heart  
 A desert and a city where  
 The thoughts that have to labour there  
 May find locality and peace,  
 And pent up feelings their release,  
 Send strength sufficient for the day,  
 And point our knowledge on its way,  
 O da quod jubes, Domine.

Eliot's preoccupations are not perhaps so irrelevant after all. We have come at last, it would seem, to "the end of expectancy," to a period where the poet abdicates from the unhealthy strain of his intense concern either with the grim physical, political, and cultural realities of the situation, or with the spurious riches of his subconscious; a period where he must say to his soul "be still, and wait without hope. . . . But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting."

Meanwhile, others "wait to begin"; principally, the latest poetic generation of all, which Mr. Grigson presents for us here in the work of James Kirkup and Derek Stanford (b. 1918) and John Bayliss

(b. 1919). "Testament and Prophecy," by Bayliss, reads like a fitting, and deliberate, epilogue to "Auden and after." The characteristic modes of Auden and MacNiece have been digested into a rather weary, platitudinous statement of Nemesis: "it was only fitting. . ."; the testament of one who has "learned not to be angry." Sheer horror has lifted from the "red fruit" of the Blitz; animus has evaporated from the "untroubled armament maker" and even from the too intentionally heavy irony of

damaging alike the squire's fence  
And a German school.

Even

What was not right and no wringing  
of the hand of God can give answer  
(is) why the innocent suffer  
equally in his sight. . . .

is merely stated, unheatedly, with rather the air of an ethical discussion. In the prologue,

Who has lived in a world of wayfarers

. . . has learnt to hide his shadow  
upon the coming of trouble.  
For the rifle that speaks in the wood  
answers the birds no longer,  
and other things lurk in the weed  
than the swift badger,  
and along river and road  
come the starved and the stranger,  
and the wise take to the reeds  
to avoid the stronger

the premonitory tremor of Audenesque vitality is itself merely an episode, seen in perspective. The technical device,

This, then, is in the eye of wayfarers

And I, on the fringe of these fellows,  
yet not of them, can see how they only,  
alone, with no loyalties, see clearly . . .

is perhaps a little obvious, and owes something to Eliot's dramatic use of the Chorus; but still, perspective it is. As for Prophecy,

and worse things shall be than have been.  
But there shall yet be better.



Out of the almond-tree and the acacia  
 shall come back beauty, out of the cornfield  
 a few shall comfort them  
 when all things else have failed;  
 and though the cities be quiet  
 and the streets wet  
 with the river's rising and the sea's invasion  
 and their buildings flat as the bomber's vision,  
 there shall be farms in the far country  
 shall end fear: and ruin yield  
 a better sight than the grey sentry.

Here there is not a mere echo of Auden, but, in tone and technique an assimilation, a blend, and a successful one, of Eliot, Owen, and Hopkins.

What comfort, then, remains to be won out of these dry foundations? It may be partly true, as John Hewitt suspects, that

we have been  
 too long untutored for the coarse machine  
 to bid our pulses march to beat of loom,  
 or find salvation in a stuffy room;  
 too many hills are calcined in our bones  
 for us to rest content on paving stones.

A more immediate reason why these younger poets cannot "find enough in the urban everyday" is that the contours of that world are still too strongly redolent of the disgust and repulsion which in the 'thirties they evoked and crystallized. Hence comes the apparent enmity between eye and imagination, which these poets (themselves using the word "romantic" for themselves) seek to dissolve. It is easy to see the dangers of "imagination" and "romantic" becoming "shorthand conveniences" in their poetry as well as in their prose manifestos; to perceive, for instance, a suspect richness of evocation, deriving from "Endymion" and the nineteenth century decadence, in Stanford's "Myth at Chairmorten"; or in Bayliss's

Hair like golden willow dipping low  
 in river water from a field of green,  
 or like gold tracery of long ago. . . .

But one can also give grateful, and, carried with Mr. Grigson, hopeful recognition of, here and there, a more genuinely evocative tone, a more natural, unembarrassed, and significant use of imagery, use of the imagination with "the eye on the object," and an honest attempt to attain a new technical competence.

PETER WILDING

## SALT AND ASHES

*German Poetry, 1944-1948*, by Leonard Forster (Bowes & Bowes 6s).

IN this most interesting and valuable little book Mr. Leonard Forster, University lecturer in German at Cambridge, offers a balanced and—although his choice of material has necessarily been limited—what must surely be a fairly comprehensive survey of the poetry written and published in the three Western Zones of Germany between 1944 and 1948.

There is much that is admirable and encouraging about this poetry. Most of it is concerned with things that are both important and intensely experienced, and perhaps that is why most of the poets prefer to write carefully in strict and traditional forms. And in manner, content and outlook there is very great diversity and individuality.

After describing briefly the poetry which deals with the actual fighting, with the great air-raids, and with the final invasion and flight, Mr. Forster comments upon a significant difference between what one may call the "returned soldier poetry" after the first World War and after the second: "After this war the stress is on the things which have none the less survived, and on that permanent enchantment which disillusion only causes to glow more magically. One could make a little anthology of the poems of homecoming and reunion, with the title: 'Das also gibt's noch' ('So that's still there')"

In the rest of his book Mr. Forster describes and exemplifies the attempts of various poets to find a meaning in what still remains: to explain and interpret the disasters which have befallen their country and the world, or through religion, through humanism of various kinds, through a variously conceived nature, nearly always through a return to some tradition, to find some permanence behind the transient, some order in the chaos, something eternal behind the flux of time. Even before the end of the war there were circulating in manuscript certain anonymous poems which interpreted the disasters which had overtaken her as a judgment upon Germany for forsaking divine values. The two great representatives of this kind of poetry are, as Mr. Forster rightly says, Werner Bergengruen and Reinhold Schneider. Since not all readers of Mr. Forster's book or of this review will know German, it seems worthwhile to offer a rough English translation of one of the most memorable of Bergengruen's poems, *Salt and Ashes*:

Salt and ashes shall sustain us,  
Beds of thorn we will endure.  
Of the wounds that sorely pain us  
Rags shall be the coverture.  
Drink the running spring shall deign us,

Since no vine will now mature.  
All her altars razed though, heinous  
Falsehood shall no more allure,  
And the air can now attain us  
Purged of its distemperature.  
Salt and ashes shall sustain us,  
Salt and ashes, they are pure.

J. B. LEISHMAN

### THE COURSE OF ITALIAN MUSIC

*The Golden Age of Italian Music*, by Grace O'Brien (Jarrolds 16s).

THIS book would appear to be the first in English to trace the history of Italian music from source to modern times. Without wishing to pile Pelion on to Ossa, one may regret that the authoress has not carried her tale into the twentieth century: nevertheless it is an important book. Miss O'Brien knows Italy well and has done a good deal of research in the subject, to judge from the fullness of her bibliography and from the numerous points of unusual detail and anecdote that abound in her book.

Like Gaul and Regent Street, the story is divided into three parts; development, maturity and influence. Following current musicological fashion, the authoress expounds her story against the contemporary social background and with constant reference to music's relations with the other arts. Indeed there is a tendency, amid the welter of Romantic *couleur locale*, to forget music. We are told a good deal more about the coloured initials in the Squarcialupi MS. than about the character and special features of the music to be found in it.

The radical trouble with this book is that Miss O'Brien has not properly decided for whom it is intended. For the amateur its narrative is interspersed with too many technicalities, not all of which are explained; for professional readers, on the other hand, its information is too haphazardly presented and insufficiently thorough in itself. For the student her method of dividing the story into chapters describing the growth of music at the various courts is confusing, because unchronological. It is tiresome to have to jump back a century or two at the beginning of each chapter. Incidentally her contraction of "Can grande della Scala" to "the court of the Della Scala" is strange and surely dipological.

Italianisms are indeed rife throughout. Guillaume de Machaut was

never to my knowledge called "Da Francia"; and why "Basso Alberti" for what we have all called "Alberti bass" since childhood? "Baroque" too, is preferable to the Italian "Barocco." Over the harpsichord she is confusing if not wrong. The terms "cembalo" and "harpsichord" are used, in the chapter on keyboard music, as though they were not synonymous and the clavicembalo is called "a kind of harpsichord" when in fact it is another name for that instrument, which by the way, Miss O'Brien very unjustifiably styles "monotonous." In this same chapter Miss O'Brien credits Domenico Scarlatti with foreshadowing the "vast developments of Beethoven," though she does not say how he did so and indeed, with all respect to Scarlatti's genius, would find it very hard indeed to substantiate such a claim. Finally, Tchaikovsky is saddled with Italian influence, Orlando di Lasso is assigned to the fifteenth century and, despite the authoress's predilection for incidental colour, Palestrina's fur-trading activities are not even mentioned.

These are all minor points. I have two other complaints to make, both on a larger scale. One is the shameful neglect of the great achievements in the field of opera by Rossini and his contemporaries. Verdi is more kindly treated but Puccini is left out in the cold completely. Miss O'Brien does not seem to care for Romantic opera much at all, for she condemns it out of hand as "crippling national inspiration and initiative." What would the Italians say? Operatic work certainly did not prevent Verdi from writing the Manzoni Requiem or the "Quattro Pezzi Sacri" which are as magnificent as any of the sacred works of non-operatically inclined composers.

The other grievance may seem a petty one but it is all the more glaring because it concerns a mystery that has never satisfactorily been cleared up. Between 1413, when Prosdócimo de Beldemandis spoke of the interesting music being written by Italian musicians, and 1475 or thereabouts, when Italian music suddenly bursts upon the scene, like Minerva fully armed, there is no trace of the formation of a native school of composers; all the music heard in Italy at the time appears to have been written by foreigners. This lacuna is not mentioned and does not even seem to have occurred to Miss O'Brien. One does not expect her to solve the enigma, but a reference to its existence would have been pertinent to her story.

In spite of all this, *The Golden Age of Italian Music* is eminently readable. The authoress writes fluently, enthusiastically and intelligently. The book is full of interest and is enhanced by some telling illustrations and an index that seems very thorough. The pity is that it is not just that much better for it could have been an invaluable book.

WILLIAM MANN

## DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL

*Broken Images*, a Journal by John Guest (Longmans 10s 6d).

THE keeping of a journal with an eye to future publication is not on the whole a foible of English authors. Mr. Guest started on his for his own amusement when he joined the Army in 1940, and continued it as a long letter in instalments to a friend. By the end of the war (and still without a thought of publication) he had written between quarter and half a million words: from these he has now selected the passages which form this book. It is wholly worth reading, objective yet intimate, frank and at the same time reticent.

There is hardly a page which has not some striking felicity of expression. "With the snow a sparkling inch thick on every leaf, and icicles four feet long hanging from the ledge of rock, the whole place looks fantastically fragile and lovely, like an arrested split-second of some incredibly delicate chemical transformation." Nor is it only nature which calls forth the imaginative phrase: Mr. Guest has this of a "nightmare emporium" in Glasgow. "What I can hardly describe to you are the crowds. The pavements on a Saturday afternoon are so jammed that the normal mode of progress is to be pushed, jostled and knocked along. As I came within the cliff-like shadow of this place, the crowd thickened to a solid stream of hot flesh divided into cells by partitions of clothing, and I found myself being sucked through bronze and marble doors, all identity gone."

Mr. Guest's impressions of people are as sharp and telling as those of beauty, decay or ugliness in his surroundings, and he is amusing, in fact as sane as he is sensitive. When he is "off-colour" he knows it, and he learns from his desolations. He calls himself once an "aesthete," but a certain moral fastidiousness is apparent from the beginning, and this becomes something stronger, as does the sympathy latent in his account of "an awful family" he met in a train when still in England—"It was impossible to hate them." At the end of the Italian campaign he had to convey German P.O.W.s to their prison camp, and writes movingly of this and of other things. "This war has got us all into such a mess that I was glad to hear, in the service we had this morning, a prayer for forgiveness, penitence."

It is novel to write one's autobiography as one goes along: this is what this author has done. We watch him in the process which he has not had the time to re-interpret in the light of later experience: we can see the development of which he is himself unconscious in the act of writing. "I have a horror of hospitals, sickness, pain and deformity that amounts to a neurosis," he wrote in England in 1941. Three years later in Italy: "My most vivid memory? A horror again, I'm afraid. Please forgive me. I have no desire to nauseate you, but something

impels me to write it. Perhaps it is a natural morbidity on my part—I doubt it—more, I think, because of the implied suffering. The whole subject of suffering occupies my serious thoughts, as indeed it must everybody's, more than any other."

He goes on to speak of his "periodic doubts regarding fundamental Christian beliefs." "I can't take all this talk about wickedness. . . . And I hate the continual Christian emphasis on the benefits to be derived from suffering." But perhaps "the theologians" (whom he girds at) are right after all when they say that mankind is a fallen race, and that suffering and sin are connected. And the genuine "Christian emphasis" is surely on the love that alone can redeem the situation—"forgiveness, penitence." Mr. Guest shows that he no longer wishes to evade the *fact* of suffering, and his final reflections in Italy, 1945, reveal him as too honest to deny the possibility that "wickedness" is also a fact. "I am unable to grasp it [the news about Buchenwald]. It really distresses me to be faced by something which I cannot fit into my scheme of things—cannot, that is, without revising my whole outlook on humanity for, after all, the Germans are human. At the moment it is all too close. I find myself with a number of pieces in my hand, and none of them fits." Perhaps the impression the Pope made on the author is one of these pieces. Mr. Guest wonders whether it wasn't "the genuine 'odour of sanctity'."

H. D. HANSHELL

### TALES OUT OF SCHOOL

*Tales Out of School*, by Geoffrey Trease (Heinemann 8s 6d).

THIS book raises the important question of whether or not it matters what children read, whether "tales out of school" are as potent an influence as lessons inside. The Victorians expected juvenile literature to be didactic because they recognized that the soul of the adult could be dyed the colour of its early reading. Russia holds the belief that the Government has the responsibility for protecting children from vulgarity, pornography, and all forces which assault and hurt the young mind. But England leaves the provision of the matter which children will read to unfettered commercial enterprise. It is the old story of the devil possessing himself of any vacuum. The publisher is no more the villain of the piece than the author, parent and public library, all of whom have given too little attention to the quality of the books available to satisfy the need. As long as there are



two publics, one reasonably discriminating, and the other educated enough to read greedily but not seriously, it is commercially more profitable to satisfy the demands of the second class than to stimulate the demands of the first. "Entertain or die. That is the publishers' dilemma." If publishers will only take what will command maximum sales, authors must of necessity write down to the lowest common denominator of popular demand. Mr. Trease's book bristles with quotations which prove that some hard thinking has been done on both sides of the Atlantic about this problem, and Miss Bayne puts the present position in a nutshell. "Inaccurate facts, badly-observed backgrounds, and false emotions are more dangerous for children who swallow them down wholesale in the realistic sort of story and believe them. They still have a respect for the printed page—I saw it in a book, so it's true.' It's a serious thing to put a twelve-year-old wrong in either his values or his facts." On this showing the number of writers for children who deserve the millstone about their necks is legion.

Mr. Trease's thesis is perhaps more unquestionable put positively than negatively. More good comes from wise reading than harm from stupid reading. I was a fanatical enthusiast for the *Magnet* and the *Gem*, for Nelson Lee and Sexton Blake, for Charles Garvice, Joseph Hocking and William Le Queux, but I cannot seriously believe that an omnivorous appetite for these works did me much harm. Equally *The Loom of Youth* was for me what *Prelude* was for Mr. Trease, and we owe, apparently, a like debt of gratitude to *Sinister Street*. Such books were pointers to better things to come, as well as unravellers of a perplexing present. Mr. Trease is, however, not free from that excessive earnestness which characterized the lady who in 1802 attacked *Cinderella* as a story which "paints some of the worst passions that can enter into the human breast—envy, jealousy, vanity, a love of dress." He tends to make class-conscious mountains out of mere molehills. He objects to aristocratic bias, complains that "even Strong has picked his boy heroes from the upper class," seems to approve of books which are "rather more critical of English behaviour than most accounts," makes delicious fun of the snobbish background of most school stories, and suggests as a new type of hero a Spanish Loyalist of 1936. He writes wisely of neglected heroes—Raleigh, Lawrence, Gino Watkins—but it is possible to suggest that dashing leadership seems to fit less easily into the century of the common man than into days when uncommon men counted for more. Experience, too, would tempt one to suppose that authors of adventure stories resort to aristocratic settings because more boys are born to homes whose tradition is adventurous service overseas than to the more stay-at-home families of an egalitarian society.

The trouble about school life for the writer of fiction is that it lacks sensational incident and therefore material for plot, a point which emerges in the contrived artificiality of recent plays of school life. The boarding school involving all a boy's life is more promising ground than the day school, though Ronald Gurner's *The Day Boy* was a happy exception. Too much of the day boy's life is spent doing his homework. Unless one is prepared to accept Mr. Trease's assertions that present-day boys of eleven are "writing love-letters to someone at the Girls' High School" and that "in real life to-day William and Ginger would spend more of their time making dates," day school life presents little opportunity for romantic fiction. My own experience does not suggest that English youth has been so Latinized, or that education in these islands has moved so sensationally from its traditional norm towards sexual precocity.

Mr. Trease is on firm ground, however, when he pleads for stories having more relation to present-day conditions. There is also an excellent case to be made out for the writing of adventure stories which shall bear some relation to the principles of U.N.E.S.C.O. Nationalist exploitation of juvenile prejudice is a violation of the sane spirit of the age. Let us by all means avoid stock types in young people's books, and give credit to foreign peoples for their distinctive contributions to civilization. "Children have too long seen the Chinese through the eyes of Sax Rohmer: it is time they saw them through those of Pearl Buck." He is also most convincing when he pleads for stories which shall give incidental but accurate information about careers which children may follow, and even to attract them to the "policeman's lot which is not a happy one." He is unexpectedly sensitive when he writes "we must all expect to be lonely from time to time throughout our lives, and the capacity first to bear, and then enjoy, a reasonable measure of solitude is one of the most valuable assets a developing personality can acquire." This is reminiscent of Pascal's discovery that "all the misfortunes of men come from a single thing, which is not to know how to live at peace in a room."

"Unexpectedly" because the book's racy style and superficial treatment of many of the vast issues raised does not lead one to expect subtlety. He says that "mercifully in this book we are not called upon to catalogue precisely." Why? The subject is important enough to justify precision, careful writing, and psychological enquiry even if it is "thorny." "There must be many 'progressive parents' (blessed phrase) who had acquired children somehow, in spite of the current vogue for contraception and abortion" is the kind of sentence and sentiment which distracts and annoys. He has an infuriating trick of introducing irrelevant autobiography and relevant comment alike in parenthesis. Speaking of a "spaced family" he writes: "A gap of years (it need not

be so many as the seven between the Yonges—I found four sufficient myself) can make a child feel ‘only’ in many respects.” This is the kind of loose writing which is unworthy of the subject. Mr. Trease apparently not only writes children’s fiction, but has sometimes on his desk as many as fourteen girls’ stories for review. He has made use of this prodigious reading in this lively but somewhat sketchy book. By calling attention to the urgent necessity for consideration of this important factor in education, he has served well the cause for which he has been a trenchant crusader.

JOHN GARRETT

### THE CONFESSIONS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

*An Autobiography*, by Gandhi (Phoenix Press 21s).

THE British Empire of Kipling proves, after all, to have been a rather ephemeral contrivance. One long lifetime spans the whole epoch from the creation to the renunciation of modern India; and some future historian, surveying Britain as the Briton surveys Babylon, may dismiss the Crown’s brightest jewel as little more than the spoil of a temporarily successful counter-attack against the Sepoy mutineers. More astonishing, however, than even this astonishing revolution, is the figure of the Hindu lawyer who was its guiding spirit. By the force of his character, Gandhi forged a victorious alliance among heterogeneous peoples sharply divided by tongue and creed, and united by nothing but the chances of geography and artificial political destiny. By the example of his life, he threw out to Christians a profound and distressing challenge.

His autobiography, which he entitled *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, is a strange document. It is disjointed and episodic. The writer’s self-examinations recall Augustine. He is indubitably an amazing person: he talks on and on, with an utter, naïve honesty which compels attention, and through the queer pattern of eccentricity, humility, and iron resolution, one can discern the magic which cast its spell even over the socialist agnostic Nehru. This magic of personality, so conspicuous a feature of saints, is beyond analysis; the reader who wants to draw conclusions, or to arrive at an evaluation, must content himself with the mere teaching and practice of the person possessing it.

Gandhi’s peculiar contribution to modern politics was, of course, his technique of Satyagraha, usually translated “civil disobedience”

or "non-violent non-co-operation." Despite the bitter protests of Communists and other hotheads—Palme Dutt railed at him as a treacherous casuist bound to ruin any movement he led—his rule of non-violence was generally observed, and it may be asked whether any other rising against a conqueror has ever achieved so rapid a success on so large a scale. But two points need to be noted. First, the power of non-violence, as such, has been greatly exaggerated. The issue here is not abstract pacifism. A refusal to fight may be morally correct; but enthusiasts for Satyagraha have insisted on its effectiveness for attaining practical political ends, and here, I think, some have gone too far. Gandhi's book reveals the immensity of the advantage he had in the freedom of agitation which British authority allowed him. Repression, when it came, was often ferocious, but it did not come till the movement had gathered an irreversible momentum. Under a Nazi viceroy, would the process have been permitted to start? And, even if it had started, would its end not have been martyrdom rather than Home Rule? Non-violence, one would say, can only be a potent political weapon on a large scale if the enemy has certain corresponding standards himself. Otherwise, the utmost that can be claimed is that violence will never succeed where non-violence fails—a very dubious proposition. As things stood in India, the British mode of government was the foundation of the anti-British revolt, at least in the form it took.

Nor is this the only respect in which Gandhi's movement was a partly occidental affair. Satyagraha appealed to Hindus because of the venerable cult of Ahimsa, or gentleness, in their religion, and quite likely it would not have taken root anywhere else: a Greek or Italian Gandhi is perhaps a little hard to conceive. But the idea appears, fully fledged, in Shelley and the Syndicalists, and Gandhi himself admits that the authors who inspired his practical work were both Europeans. The first was Ruskin. The second was Tolstoy. From their teachings followed not only his final pacifism, but his campaign against mass industry in favour of handicrafts and the simple life. A most interesting feature of Gandhi's programme is the way in which it sought to apply, in a backward land, ideas which arose in Europe as a mere helpless protest against modern civilization already triumphant. Pius IX might have relished it. On the whole, the experiment failed, and westernization is the order of the day at Delhi. But possibly the new India will not be quite the mechanical monster which its rich men and politicians envisage.

It would be ungenerous to dwell on these alien elements in the thought and work of a great Indian patriot, whose career has shamed Europe, if he did not dwell on them himself. But he does; and because he does, it is fair to remark further that his sanctity was not the purely

Hindu phenomenon which it appeared at a distance. Despite his reverence for the *Bhagavad Gita* (the third formative influence in his reading), Gandhi was not a saint of Hinduism, but a saint of vague theism. The towering mystical metaphysic which is the soul of Hindu belief seems to have found little favour in his philosophy. He held that religion and morality were synonymous (p. 139), and his Christian contacts, which were mainly unfortunate, did not encourage a deeper view, though it is curious to note that he believed in original sin (p. 196). His public morality we know; his private morality, about which he is engagingly frank, consisted for the most part in elaborate asceticism. Ironically enough, at a time when many British progressives—such as Shaw—were advocating abstention from meat, it was the fashionable thing among Indian progressives to advocate indulgence in meat, a food to which they ascribed the mastery of the British over the vegetarian Hindus. As a youth Gandhi flirted with this fashion, but his scruples conquered him, and when his pious mother wanted him to vow vegetarianism before his departure for England, he agreed willingly and kept the vow with increasing rigour for the rest of his life.

Like most holy men outside the Christian tradition, Gandhi has an inescapable air of paleness and bleakness. As Von Hügel observed, the habitual tendency of the oriental or neo-platonic saint is to cut away everything—sometimes even morality; and although Gandhi followed a different path, his religion of "truth" was rather impoverishing. It imposed violent and abnormal restraints on the appetites. It rejected higher education and what is generally regarded as culture. (That rejection estranged at least one of Gandhi's sons.) It included, to be sure, a splendid opposition to the Gadarene gallop of capitalistic progress; but a question persists and will not be silenced. The battle having been won and a stable Indian Republic achieved, what did Gandhi expect his people to do? Were they to stagnate for ever, eating fruit and weaving their own clothes, miraculously preserved from the contagion of foreign tastes and the invasion of foreign armies? The most serious criticism of Gandhi—if any criticism from an English writer be not presumptuous—is that he converted his own austere discipline into a universal rule, and expected too much from it. He saw life flat, as it were; he took too little account of the heights and depths and colours of human existence. He was lucky in that he dealt, on the one hand, with a compromising opponent, and, on the other, with a poverty-stricken and zealous following. Surely, however, the world's evil is more formidable than he thought it, and the good richer and more complex.



## EXCLUSIVENESS ANCIENT AND MODERN

*The Stranger at the Gate*, by T. J. Haarhoff. (Blackwell 12s 6d).

A STUDY of "Aspects of Exclusiveness and Co-operation in the Ancient World with some Reference to Modern Problems" might seem at first sight to make promises neither explicit nor alluring. But in fact Professor Haarhoff gives an absorbing and apparently an exhaustive account of the Greek and Roman attitude to foreigners.

Inevitably it is the attitude of these two peoples to each other that holds the centre of the picture: and it is here that we see the explanation of the sub-title in the contrast between the "exclusiveness" of the Greeks of the "best period," and the wider outlook of Rome (which was to some extent an inheritance from Alexander), and finally in the exceptionally fruitful "co-operation" of Roman and Greek under the Empire which did so much to make Europe. It is on this subject that Professor Haarhoff is at his best and has his most interesting and valuable remarks to make.

Where Virgil is concerned Professor Haarhoff is evidently an admirer of Mr. W. F. J. Knight (indeed there are frequent references in his notes to both the brothers Knight). He follows him in the pedantic spelling which most English people avoid in favour of that used by Dryden, Newman and Tennyson. He even follows him by deserting his own usually lucid style and dropping into that apocalyptic manner which makes *Roman Vergil* in spite of its wealth of interesting matter, so exasperating to read. One of the oddest features of this book is the sudden appearance at the end of a long and masterly chapter on "The Prestige of Hellenism" of the following typically Sibylline utterance from "Cumæan Gates":

"The motive for writing poetry and for reading poetry is the desire for Heaven before the time. It is Roman to wait patiently for Heaven, as Scipio was told in his dream. But this patience in waiting pent up a poetry deeper than poetry of Greeks. And depth is of the earth."

This is thrown in without comment as though it clinched the argument. Its effect on one reader at least was to make him wonder whether he had failed to understand Professor Haarhoff through twenty-two pages.

The last section, which compares the relations of English and Afrikaans in South Africa with the relations of Greek and Latin in the Roman Empire, should be of absorbing interest to all who have taken interest in any problems of language, especially of the relations of two languages in one country, however different the cases may be: it could be read for instance with very great profit throughout Ireland.

The list of corrections on page ix is unhappily still not exhaustive:



and why, when Greek type is evidently available, should our eyes be feasted on such horrors as "sumpatheia tōn hōlon"?

JOHN RICHARDS

### A GUIDE TO MONASTERIES

*Medieval Monasteries and Minsters*, by H. Ernest Roberts (S.P.C.K. 12s 6d).

IN 1940 Dom David Knowles published his most useful volume on *The Religious Houses of Medieval England*. His purpose was to catalogue all the medieval abbeys and priories of England (and Wales), with the houses of the mendicant orders. The houses are grouped under each religious order, with the date of foundation and footnotes on obscure or disputed points. There is also an admirable introductory essay on "The Origins and Development of the Religious Life in England." In 1941 Mr. Neil Ker, working on notes that have been accumulated in the Bodleian Library for many years past, gave us his invaluable *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*. The volume was published by the Royal Historical Society, but has been out of print for many years. It gives a complete list of all manuscript books that survive to-day, and that can be traced back to the library of some religious house in England, Scotland or Wales. The houses are here tabulated in alphabetical order, without reference to the individual religious orders or to their geographical situation. Mr. Roberts has now added a third volume to these two most useful guides. His purpose has been to list all surviving ruins, even the slightest remnants, of the great monastic buildings which were once a glory of England. His list includes all surviving cathedrals as well as the strictly monastic houses. Scotland is not included in this volume, but the Welsh houses are listed. The houses are grouped under their respective orders, and the mendicant orders are included. But the classification is complicated by the fact that Mr. Roberts has divided his list into two parts: the provinces of Canterbury and York. However, there is a convenient general index at the end of the volume, and there is no difficulty in locating any site which the reader may wish to study.

As compared with the two earlier volumes, Mr. Roberts has had the advantage of illustration; and he has made admirable use of his opportunity. Eight well-chosen full-page photographs are printed immediately after the short Introduction on "Monks, Canons and Friars," and on "The Different Parts of a Monastery." They illustrate the successive stages of English architecture. There is also an excellent

view of Chester Cathedral from the air, which Mr. Roberts (who writes from West Kirby, Cheshire) has chosen as the best surviving example of a complete group of monastic buildings. The second part of his Introduction takes the reader on a tour through these buildings, explaining each part in detail and stating briefly the meaning of such unfamiliar terms as slype, garth, etc. The rest of the photographs—and they are numerous—are scattered throughout the volume. They illustrate the various parts of a typical monastic house, but the author has done his best to choose his photographs so as to give some notion, however inadequate, of the surviving ruins on each site.

Apart from a series of useful Appendices on such general topics as apses, chapter houses, canopied stalls, rood screens and so forth, the bulk of the text is occupied with a straightforward list of all the former monasteries and friaries of England and Wales, and a very brief, but accurate description of such ruins as survive to-day. Mr. Roberts says modestly in his Foreword that "most of these notes are the result of careful personal study extending over very many years"; and adds his thanks for help received from various fellow-workers. I have not had the patience to work through the lists which Dom David Knowles published in 1940, checking them against the lists in this volume; but I have turned to the description of several minor sites in which I happen to be interested, and have found this volume a most useful guide. One omission I have detected. It happens that I have recently been at work on a fine twelfth-century manuscript from Wallingford priory in Oxfordshire. Wallingford was a cell of St. Albans, and I came near to taking a bus-ride from Oxford as a gesture of personal thankfulness for the simple beauty of the script in this volume, which is now among the Royal MSS. in the British Museum. Mr. Roberts has overlooked Wallingford; but I do not think that it would be easy to find many similar omissions. At the end of his volume he has printed a much-needed list of the many monasteries and friaries which have left no visible trace to-day of their former buildings. Most of the names in this list are of less known houses: many of them are the names of small nunneries. But it comes as a shock to find great Benedictine and Cistercian abbeys like Winchcombe and Pipewell included in this list. The total loss of houses such as Sion or Sheen is less surprising, for London has devoured much that an antiquarian would wish to see preserved. None the less, the list of surviving ruins is long and tempting. Mr. Roberts may be sure that his book will earn him the gratitude of many kindred spirits, whom he will have encouraged to venture out themselves on a tour of exploration—and who will thus have an opportunity of communing in spirit for a time with a long-past age of faith.

AUBREY GWYNN

## BROADCASTING

THE B.B.C.'s national monopoly of the air is now to be examined under a system of a Committee of Enquiry which has already become familiar to us in a variety of contexts. It will not be difficult to find in our immense bureaucratic broadcasting machine faults and anomalies in abundance. Already the appointed examiners are being inundated with suggestions and complaints from all sides. The real problems will emerge in earnest when an effort is made to prescribe a cure for the evils of monopoly which will not prove more vexatious than the disease.

"Sponsored Broadcasting," the all too obvious answer, is of course being hawked energetically by its supporters as the sovereign panacea of all radio ills. In fact, throwing open the air to Big Business would disappoint the expectations of any hopeful listener whose tastes rose above the lowest common denominators of speech and music. There is no reason to suppose that the few tight and exclusive hands which habitually gain control of commercial broadcasting would behave in England otherwise than they have done elsewhere. Judged on form, they would do what they call "playing safe," which means that they would create a debased and enormously enlarged extension of the present variety department.

Meanwhile, a considerable proportion of experienced free-lance broadcasters—actors, writers and critics who ought to know better—are agitating to obtain just this transformation scene. For their hostility the B.B.C. has largely itself to blame. These outside contributors are taking the first tangible opportunity to express the bitterness which they feel as a class towards certain booking departments of the Corporation. Such unwholesomeness is inevitable in some measure as long as contributors have to negotiate with the centralized representatives of a monopoly, that is to say, with a despotism. Whatever the merits of a free-lance broadcaster's case, in the event of a deadlock with the bookings department he must either submit to their terms or give up radio work altogether. There is no alternative market.

The dissatisfaction produced by these conditions is not directly audible to the listener, but it takes a continuous toll on the quality of presentation. It is not too much to say that one of the main problems of the commission is to propose an acceptable means of rescuing the B.B.C. from the invidious and demoralizing situation of being judge and advocate of its own cause. If the Corporation is to be confirmed in its lonely status, it is imperative that it be made subject, in transactions with bodies and individuals professionally interested in broadcasting, to the checks and balances of independent arbitration.

One approach to the problem which deserves consideration is the possibility of dividing the Corporation into a number of separate and completely self-governing parts with independent control over expenditure, appointments and administration in general.

A junior official of the B.B.C. whose position is long overdue for revision is the "producer." As well as producer he is usually also writer, editor and talent scout. If he is interested or conscientious he can easily become overworked, but he always remains underpaid. In Talks Department his work is not even acknowledged in the *Radio Times*. Yet he is the man of the organization who comes to grips with the stuff of broadcasting, with the sounds that go out to the receiving sets. The anomalies of the producer's position derive from the peculiar nature of the B.B.C., as simultaneously a fun factory, a clearing-house for ideas, and an off-shoot of the Civil Service. In the internal struggle for power the hierarchic values of the Civil Service have scored nearly all along the line. The administrators are the masters. They call the tune though they can't play the instruments. Relatively the producers are under-dogs and paid accordingly. It is not uncommon, when marriage or paternity increase his obligations, for a producer to apply with reluctance for a transfer to an administrative post, simply to get better pay.

But when all the many valid criticisms of the B.B.C. have had a healthy airing, it behoves us to remember that it remains in design and achievement by far the most ambitious broadcasting service in the world. The Third Programme is the envy of educated people in every country.

In the past year alone the Third Programme has produced a multitude of broadcasts for which we have reason to be grateful. Of many rewarding lectures and talks those of Professors Butterfield and MacKinnon stand out in my recollection. But above all tribute is due to the History in Sound of European Music, the series under the general editorship of Professor Gerald Abraham which has given utterance to a selection of beautiful and academically important ancient music, previously inaccessible to the majority of us. I hope the information that there are listeners who go to the trouble of modifying their engagements so as not to miss one of these broadcasts may give satisfaction to Professor Abraham and to Mr. Alec Robertson who played nurse and watchdog to the programme as well as whetting our musical appetites with his artfully casual introductions.

Special congratulations to Mr. Lionel Gamlin for "Hullo Children," his holiday series on the Light Programme for younger listeners. This is light in the best sense of the word—compact, witty, unpatronizing, various—in short, everything that an entertainment for children devised by a mere adult can hope to be.

JOHN MCCONNELL

e  
l  
r  
  
r  
o  
e  
.  
o  
n  
g  
r  
e  
e  
y  
e  
s  
n  
y  
et  
  
a  
n  
n  
n  
  
a  
Of  
d  
ue  
ne  
en  
nt  
r-  
ng  
ve  
no  
ur  
  
,"  
his  
g,  
en  
ELL





# THE NEWMAN BOOKSHOP

*Catholic Booksellers*

**WESTMINSTER MARYLAND, U.S.A.**

Catalogues issued bi-monthly  
New Catholic and General Books  
of all publishers promptly supplied

*for Catholic books go to*

**Duckett**

*the Catholic book centre*

140 STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2

Telephone: Temple Bar 3008 Telegrams: Gallows Estrand London

*new and second-hand  
Catholic books in all  
languages sent all over  
the world*

FOR NEWS AND VIEWS OF CATHOLIC BOOKS,  
READ "DUCKETT'S REGISTER," MONTHLY 3D.

# Jacquard

## Fine Fabrics

**16, Grosvenor Street, London W.1.**

Printed in Great Britain by  
UNWIN BROTHERS LTD LONDON AND WOKING